PASSCODES

Cruel Man Cruel Bear

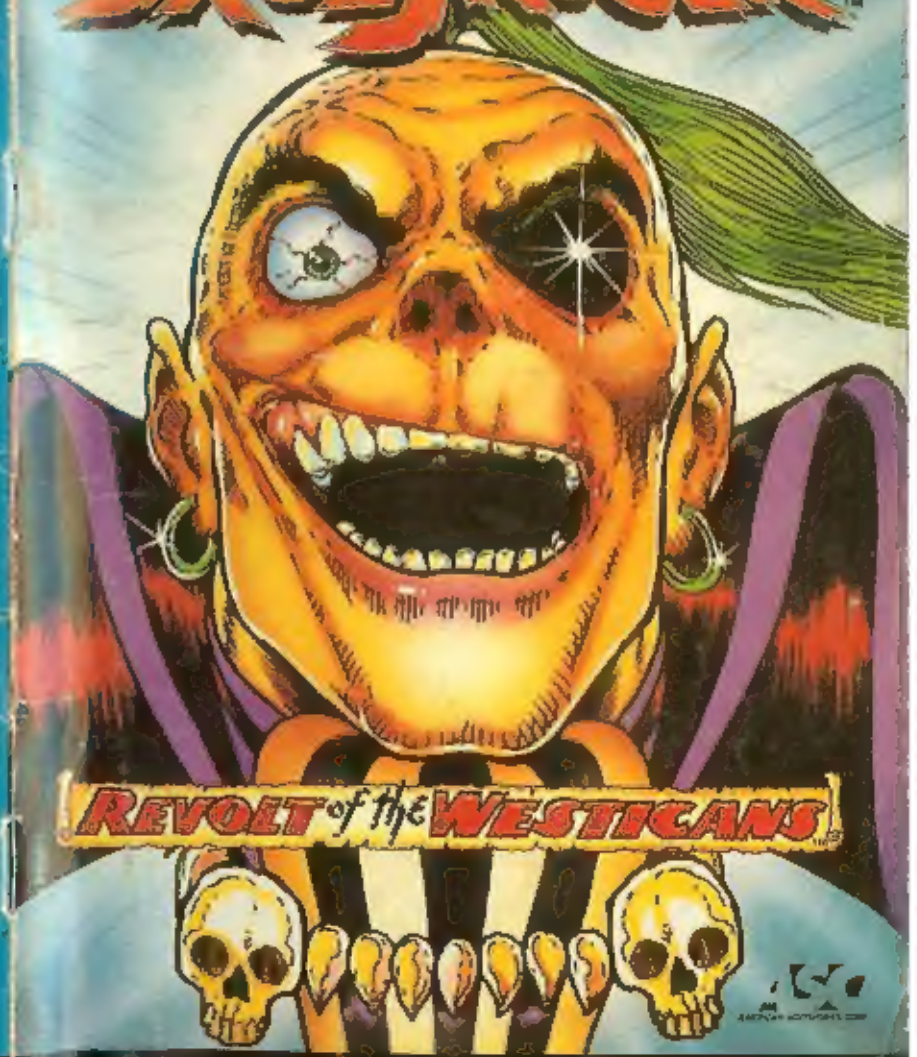
Claw is Mean Dock

American Softworks Corporation
228 East 45th Street
New York, NY 10017

Printed in Japan

SNS-SL-USA

SKULJAGGER™



REVOLT of the WESTICANS™

Instruction Booklet

SUPER NINTENDO
ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Table of Contents

The Story	CHAPTER 1	The Sword	3
	CHAPTER 2	The Revolution	14
	CHAPTER 3	Skúljagger's Prison	26
	CHAPTER 4	The War Begins	37
	CHAPTER 5	The Trip To Urnum	47
	CHAPTER 6	The Lost City	56
	CHAPTER 7	The Final Battle	65
Instructions			76-78

How the Story and Game Work Together

*The **Skúljagger** story is jam-packed with hidden clues. Figure them out and they'll help you find dozens of secret things in the game—things like fantasy zones, power-ups, and a hidden warp zone. Be forewarned: anything could be a clue!*

ASC® is a trademark of American Softworks Corporation. "Skúljagger", "Kiltish", "Westican", "Storm Jaxon", "Urnum", "Black-Mask", "Wits", "Trina", "Bladeback", are trademarks of Barr Entertainment Inc., used under license by ASC. © 1992 Barr Entertainment, Inc. All rights reserved.

WARNING: PLEASE READ THE ENCLOSED CONSUMER INFORMATION AND PRECAUTIONS BOOKLET CAREFULLY BEFORE USING YOUR NINTENDO® HARDWARE SYSTEM OR GAME PAK.

LICENSED BY Nintendo

NINTENDO, SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM AND THE OFFICIAL SEALS ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF NINTENDO OF AMERICA INC. © 1991 NINTENDO OF AMERICA INC.

THIS OFFICIAL SEAL IS YOUR ASSURANCE THAT NINTENDO HAS APPROVED THE QUALITY OF THIS PRODUCT. ALWAYS LOOK FOR THIS SEAL WHEN BUYING GAMES AND ACCESSORIES TO ENSURE COMPLETE COMPATIBILITY WITH YOUR SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM. ALL NINTENDO PRODUCTS ARE LICENSED BY SALE FOR USE ONLY WITH OTHER AUTHORIZED PRODUCTS BEARING THE OFFICIAL NINTENDO SEAL OF QUALITY.

Storm Jaxon hated Captain Skúljagger.

***Hated** him, pure and simple.*

The reason was easy. For ten years, Skúljagger had ruled the island of Westica with all the cruelty in his Kiltish heart.

For ten long years, Skúljagger had forced proud Westicans to work like slaves in their own jemerald mines.

For ten long and deadly years, he had silenced anyone who opposed him... with one swing of a Kiltish battle-axe.

Ten years was enough of Skúljagger.

As far as Storm was concerned, the time had come for things to change.

The time had come for Westica to be free again.

1 The Sword

Storm Jaxon ducked behind a barrel, crouched down, and got ready to strike. He knew it was a crazy plan. He knew that one wrong step would land him in Skúljagger's savage grip.

But he wanted that sword.

From his hiding place, Storm had a perfect view of Gauntlet Grounds—the giant field where Skúljagger trained his Kiltish troops for battle. The sword was sitting on a brown crate, near the edge of the trampled grass.

Its golden handle flashed once in the morning sun.

"Skúljagger's sword," Storm muttered, shaking his head. "I must be *insane*." As usual, Storm was chewing a chunk of homemade gum. He blew a snap-cherry bubble, popped it, and gazed at the Captain's sword. "It's just *begging* for a new owner."

Storm watched Skuljagger march around the field, shouting at his troops. The Kiltish Army was the largest, fiercest force in the world—and Skuljagger was the Army's fiercest Captain. Storm could see the cruel glint in Skuljagger's one good eye.

"I've heard that some foolish Westicans are talking about revolution," Skuljagger shouted. He threw his head back in laughter. "Ha! What a delicious joke! I'd love nothing more than to crush the Westicans—crush them like pathetic bugs—then feed the left-overs to the battle-dogs. How does *that* sound, my mighty steel-masked men?"

The warriors lifted their rifles and shouted their infamous battle cry. It was a high-pitched scream—like the sound of a war-crazed, two-headed Kiltish battle-dog.

Storm felt a cold line of sweat run down his side. At any moment, Skuljagger could turn and march back to his sword.

It was now or never.

"Ongawa!" Storm whispered, then surged across the rocky ground. He grabbed the handle and pulled the sword free. The fine silver blade vibrated in his hand like a living being.

Storm smiled, gripped the golden handle tighter, and took off running.

After only three steps, though, Storm felt his boot catch on a hidden root. He tripped forward and smashed the sword against an empty metal barrel. The barrel thundered like a Chinese gong—and Storm tumbled to the ground.

Skuljagger spun around, his good eye blazing fire. Every Kiltish warrior cocked his rifle.

Storm snatched the sword from the dirt and leaped to his feet.

"Crush that foolish cockroach!" Skuljagger screamed. "I *must* have that sword back. I *must!*"

Storm sprinted toward an old pier, pumping his arms like mad. The sound of the Kiltish battle cry pierced the morning air, and an icy chill shot up Storm's spine.

"Whatever you do, don't choke *now*, " he said to himself.

Storm knew the city of Tuscamesh like the back of his hand. He had lived in the Westican capital all his life, and knew every house, every factory, and every winding street by heart. If he could make it across these bridges and piers, he'd end up at old

Mr. Roop's warehouse. If he was lucky, maybe he could lose the Kiltish in there.

But if he *wasn't* lucky....

Skúljagger pulled a long pistol from his belt. He took aim at Storm's back, and a gruesome grin crossed his face.

"This'll teach that Westican worm to touch *my* sword."

A shot rang out, and Storm heard the bullet whiz past his ear—exploding a crate just beside his head. He leaped across a hole in the old wooden pier, then sailed over a barrel like a jungle cat.

Storm glanced over his shoulder. The Kiltish warriors were gaining on him.

"I must have that sword!" Skúljagger screamed, reloading his pistol. "Fire at him, fire!"

Storm ducked down between a small brown crate and a big yellow barrel, just as twenty rifle-shots ripped through the air. The hail of bullets turned the crate into pulp, showering Storm with shreds of wood.

"Whoa!" Storm cried, looking down at a hole that a bullet had torn in his shirt. "Was that close or *what?!*"

A sudden burst of energy rushed through his body, and Storm sprinted off—faster than he ever thought he could. He jumped, dodged bullets, and leaped from pier to pier. Soon the Kiltish warriors lagged behind, slowed by their masks and heavy armor. Storm jumped onto an old stone bridge, looked over his shoulder, and grinned.

He was almost starting to like this.

"Sound the general alarm!" Skúljagger yelled, cupping his mouth with both hands. His eye flamed with rage as Storm grew smaller and smaller. "Call out every Kiltish fighter in Tuscamesh." Skúljagger pointed one long, crooked red finger at Storm's back. "I want that worm's head brought to me on a silver platter!"

"Sound the general alarm!" the Kiltish warriors repeated.

A moment later, Storm heard the alarm bell ringing from the tallest tower in town. In a moment, every Kiltish warrior, sailor, and Black-Mask would be scouring the streets of Tuscamesh.

■◆◆

One thing was sure, Storm didn't want to meet any Black-Masks. They were Skúljagger's personal guard—fiercely loyal, and highly-trained in the martial arts. Only those who had advanced beyond the black-belt stage of training were awarded the honor of a Kiltish black-mask. It was rumored that a Black-Mask could out-think, out-punch, and out-kick even the most deadly martial masters of the world.

Storm crossed the final bridge, and sprinted toward Mr. Roop's warehouse. He remembered a small secret window, hidden in a back room of the ancient building. If he could make it to the window, he stood a chance of getting out alive.

But the streets were already crawling with Kiltish.

He raced across the road, jumped onto a chain, and swung through an open window—right into the heart of the warehouse.

"He's in the warehouse!" a Kiltish sailor called.

"Company Blitz, take the front! Company Ravage, the back!"

"Swing your chains, and take no prisoners!"

Storm scurried away from the window, leaned back against a wall, and tried to catch his breath. It felt like the entire Kiltish Empire was after him. He glanced down at the gold and silver sword in his hand.

"I hope you're worth the trouble," Storm muttered—as if the sword could hear him.

Next, he turned a corner and entered a giant room filled with barrels, crates, and boxes. He rushed toward a stairway at the end of the room—leaping and dodging over obstacles along the way. But as he got closer to the stairway, he heard Kiltish boots pounding up the steps.

He stopped short and spun around, trapped.

"There he is!"

"Don't let the insect escape!"

Kiltish sailors were blocking every door. They rushed toward Storm, swinging skull-chains that whistled in the air.

There was only one way out. Storm scrambled up a ladder, jumped onto a stack of six dark brown crates, and smashed open a secret window with the sword-handle. He shimmied out—tearing his pants on the broken glass—and slid down the rain gutter with one arm.

"He's down there!" the sailors shouted, too big to fit through the window. Their faces flushed red with fury.

"I need to get to the old part of town," Storm said, his chest heaving. "And I need to get there *now*."

The old part of Tuscamesh was a maze of thin alleys and curving streets. Even some Westicans got lost in the labyrinthine passageways. If he could make it to the old town, he was *sure* he could lose the Kiltish.

He knew a short-cut across some old bridges.

"Too late to worry about safety," Storm muttered, as he turned and sprinted toward an old bridge, leaping over a sign that read: "DANGER! BAD BRIDGES! KEEP OFF! DANGER!"

Storm caught a glimpse of something black in the distance ahead. It ducked behind a barrel, then disappeared like the shadow of a blade.

"Uh-oh," Storm said, his heart sinking. "A Black-Mask."

He ran forward carefully, ready to swing the sword. Suddenly a black blur appeared out of nowhere, chopping rock-hard arms and slicing the air. Storm screamed and ducked his head. The Black-Mask's bladed foot missed his neck by an inch.

The Black-Mask landed in ready position—hands up, legs apart, shoulders hunched. They squared-off, circling and staring daggers at each other's eyes.

Suddenly the Black-Mask exploded into action. He spun around and sliced the air into pieces, screaming a high-pitched scream. Storm ducked, and the Black-Mask's foot-blade tore his shirt.

"You're quick, for a kid," the Black-Mask said.

At that, Storm attacked, swinging the sword with all his might. The Black-Mask jumped, dodged the blade, and landed near the edge of the bridge. But one foot landed on a loose stone, and the Black-Mask lost his balance.

Storm saw his chance and moved like lightning. He grabbed a brown keg and heaved it forward. The keg knocked the Black-Mask backward—and over the edge of the bridge.

By the time the Black-Mask splashed into the water—far, far below—Storm had already spun and sprinted off.

He ran into the winding streets of the old town, past farmers pushing carts of snap-cherries, purple sea-grapes, green island-limes, and tasty Westican-oranges. Storm used those fruits to flavor his homemade bubble gum, and all the merchants knew him by name. He passed tired Westican workers on their way to the jemerald mines. He smelled the warm smell of Westican bread rising from Pym's Bakery.

And there wasn't a single Kiltish warrior in sight.

Storm smiled. He stopped running, and strolled across the stone bridge that led toward home.

◆◆◆

"I don't believe it," Storm said to himself, smiling and shaking his head. "I just stole Skúljagger's sword."

As he walked through the winding streets, Storm thought about Captain Skúljagger.

He would never forget the day that Skúljagger sailed his battle fleet into Tuscamesh Harbor. Even though Storm had been very young at the time, he could still remember the sound of Kiltish cannonballs ripping through the air. He could remember his first glimpse of Skúljagger, too—a giant man with a scalded skull, laughing as he slashed his way down Bladeback Street.

Storm's mother had been killed that day. She had been a doctor at a Westican hospital. The hospital had been destroyed by cannon-fire from Skúljagger's own personal battleship.

Skúljagger's force crushed Westica in less than a day. From then on, Westica was no longer a proud, free nation—as it had been for a thousand years. It was just another, tiny part of the mighty Kiltish Empire.

Worse yet, it was *Skúljagger's* part.

Storm gripped the sword tighter in his hands. As far as he was concerned, Skúljagger deserved *whatever* he got.

Storm caught a glimpse of his house in the distance. Another two-hundred yards and he'd be home, safe and sound.

"Halt, worm!" a voice shouted.

A pistol shot rang out, and a bullet smashed through a window beside Storm's head.

It was Skúljagger. The Captain was running at full speed, his purple cape flowing out behind him like a sinister wing.

"Give up, you miserable scum-worm!" Skúljagger shouted.

Storm ducked into a side-alley, and ran for his life. He needed a plan, and he needed one *fast*.

That's when he saw ten rain barrels, lined up in a row along the thin winding alley.

He jumped inside the last barrel and ducked his head, just as Skúljagger turned down the alley.

"You're crazy if you think you can escape!" Skúljagger cried, looking down the empty alley-way. "You stinking *pond-scum!*"

Storm listened to Skúljagger's heavy steps. They grew closer and closer, until they stopped right beside the barrel. Storm held his breath. A silence fell that seemed to last forever. Then—at last—the footsteps started up again, moved away, and disappeared down another alley.

Storm let out a quiet sigh of relief. He reached out of the barrel and tapped the sword against the closest window.

"Who is it?" a voice asked from inside.

"It's *me*," Storm whispered. "Let me in, fast!"

"Storm!" the young man shouted, yanking open the window and looking down. "What are you doing in the rain barrel?"

"Shut up!" Storm said, handing him the sword. "Just grab the sword and help me in."

It was Storm's best friend. His real name was R.L. Wright, but everyone called him Wits.

Basically, Wits was a genius. His bedroom looked like the laboratory of a mad scientist—with wires, test tubes, and strange concoctions covering his desk, and complicated diagrams tacked onto his walls. Wits knew *how* to make the finest crossbows in Westica, using twine from the bark of the finger-tree. He knew how to weave rope from the vines of the moss-plant. And, to top it off, he was almost as much of a daredevil as Storm.

Wits snatched the sword, dropped it to the floor, and pulled Storm through the window.

"Ingawa!" Storm said, jumping to his feet.

"Ingawa!" Wits answered.

The two friends raised their hands in the air and slammed them together. The "ingawa" was their secret greeting.

Only one other person in the world knew the "ingawa"—and that person was Trina Wright, Wits' half-sister. Trina knew the Westican jungle as well as Storm or Wits, and was the best crossbow shooter Storm had ever met.

"I thought I heard your voice, Storm," Trina said, ducking into the room and giving Storm a quick ingawa. Right away, Trina spotted the shining sword.

"What *is* that?" she asked.

"Ahem." Storm cleared his throat, as if getting ready for

the announcement of the year. "It's Skūljagger's sword."

"*Skūljagger's* sword?" Wits and Trina said at the exact same time.

Trina turned pale. "You mean you *stole* it?"

Storm nodded.

Trina rushed over and slammed the shutters closed. Wits locked the door and leaned his back against it, breathing hard.

"This is serious," Trina said in a whisper.

"Did he see your face?" Wits asked.

"Not a chance," Storm answered proudly. "The only thing Skūljagger saw was my *back*."

Wits broke into a little grin, and shook his head. "I can't believe you actually did it!" he said, excited. "INGAWA!"

"But haven't you heard the rumors?" Trina asked.

"What rumors?" Storm asked.

"It's supposed to be a *magic* sword," Trina answered. "I've heard that Skūljagger found it in a jemerald mine. Some people even say Skūljagger *talks* to it."

"Magic sword, *hah!*" Storm laughed. "No such thing."

"Easy, smart guy," Wits said. "There are plenty of weird things in the world." He started counting things off on his fingers. "There are power stones and inexplicable force-fields and maybe even *ghosts*. Just yesterday I was studying an ancient cliff-face near the beach. It had strange writing all over it—and it wasn't Westican writing, either. Where did it come from? A lost civilization?" Wits shrugged. "So who knows, maybe the sword *is* magic."

Storm leaped to his feet and swiped the sword through the air.

"Dear magic sword," he said, talking into the handle, "Please make me a huge breakfast of bladeback steaks and bread. And while you're at it, let me blow magic flavor bubbles that make me fly."

Storm waited a moment—and nothing happened. Wits and Trina couldn't help but laugh.

"So much for magic swords," Storm said.

Still, it was an incredible sword. There was a big hole in the blade, right near the handle—where a jewel might have been. Right below the hole was a tiny inscription, which read, "LDL DRU."

"I'm starting to get a feeling," Trina said. "A *strong* feeling."

"Uh-oh," Storm said. For as long as Storm could remember, Trina had gotten strange feelings whenever something big was about to happen. It was as if she had an amazing sixth sense.

"I've got a feeling that Skūljagger is going to cancel Mask Day," Trina said. "All because of this sword."

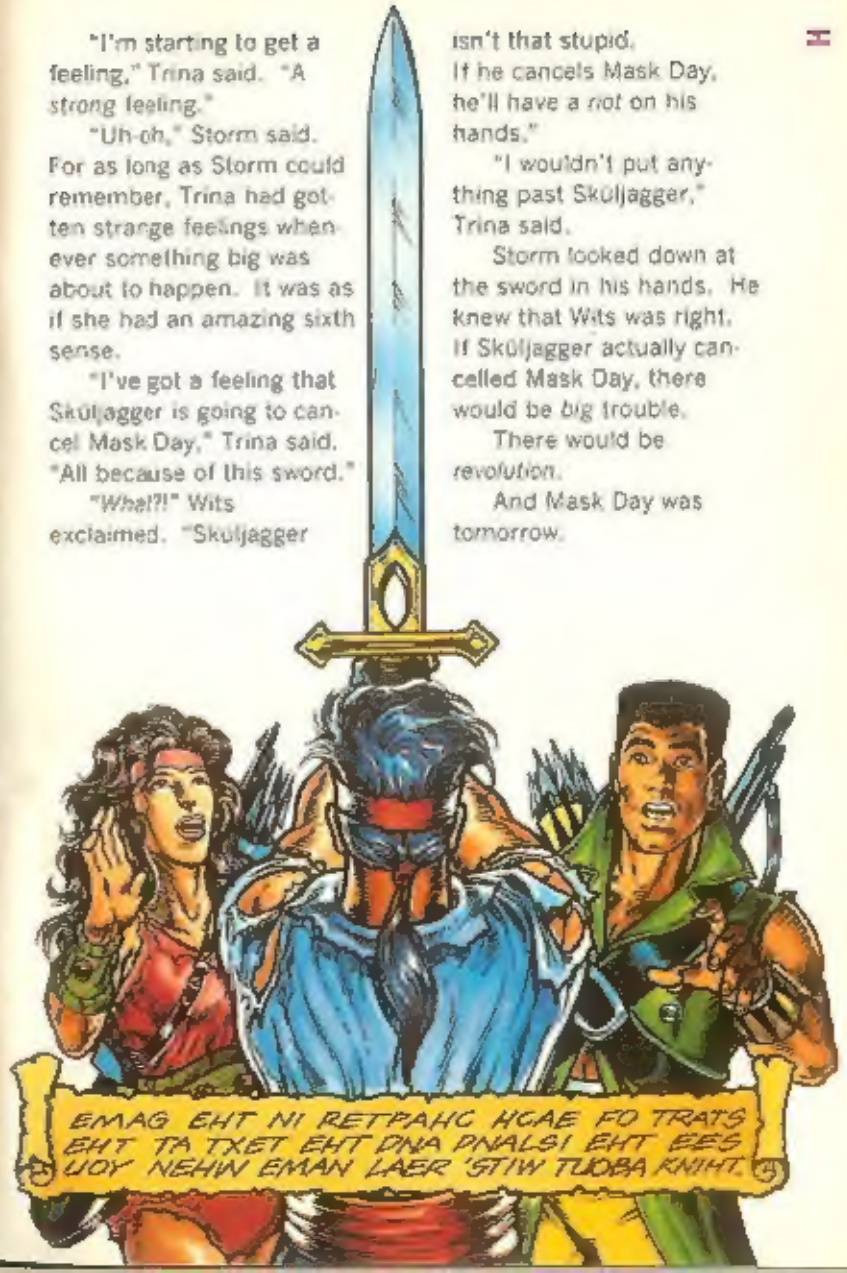
"*What?!*" Wits exclaimed. "Skūljagger isn't that stupid. If he cancels Mask Day, he'll have a *riot* on his hands."

"I wouldn't put anything past Skūljagger," Trina said.

Storm looked down at the sword in his hands. He knew that Wits was right. If Skūljagger actually cancelled Mask Day, there would be *big* trouble.

There would be *revolution*.

And Mask Day was tomorrow.



The people of Westica lived for Mask Day.

It was the one day of the year when they didn't have to work in the jemerald mines. It was the one, single, solitary day of the year when Sküljagger actually let them celebrate.

On Mask Day, everyone wore bright green masks made of bone, straw, and painted wood. According to tradition, anyone who wore a mask on Mask Day became completely invisible. All day and all night, the Westicans sang, feasted on roasted bladeback, and danced through the streets of Tuscamesh. Storm's favorite part of Mask Day was the story-telling contest, where old men told tales of how happy Westica had been—before Sküljagger came.

Later that day, Storm heard the news.

"Hear ye, hear ye!" the Kiltish warriors shouted. "By order of Captain Sküljagger, there will be no Mask Day! And any Westican caught wearing a mask will be shot on sight!"

Storm's heart began to pound like crazy his chest. Trina had been right. There was going to be big trouble.

And Storm was the cause of it all.

2 the REVOLUTION

Storm sneaked down the steps like a thief, careful not to make a sound. He could hear the voices, rising and falling like angry waves.

Storm's father had ordered him to stay in his room and read. But this was a top-secret meeting—and Storm wouldn't have missed it for the world.

"Keep it down!" someone said. "If a Kiltish guard hears us, we're history!"

Storm hid behind a workbench, and peered into his father's locksmith shop. Twenty men were gathered around the workbenches, their faces glowing in the dim candlelight. The air inside was tense and still.

Storm had never seen his father so angry in all his life.

"It's the last straw!" Coe Jaxon said, slamming his fist on his workbench. "Sküljagger can't just *cancel* Mask Day!"

Everyone grumbled in agreement.

"For ten years," his father continued, "Sküljagger has treated us like dirt. He's forced us to work like slaves in the jemerald mines. And then he takes all of *our* jemeralds, packs them onto ships, and sends them off to the Kiltish King."

"And we're left with *nothing*," someone said. "*Nothing!*"

"Those jemeralds are *ours*, not his," Coe Jaxon said, getting angrier and angrier. "They came from *our* island. And they should *stay* on our island."

All his life, Storm had heard his father talk about Westica's incredible jemeralds. He knew that jemeralds were the most valuable stones on earth—far more valuable than diamonds or rubies. He also knew that the small island of Westica had more jemeralds than the rest of the world put together.

Unfortunately, the Kiltish King had a big thing for jemeralds. And that's why—ten years earlier—he had sent Captain Lucius Khan Sküljagger to conquer Westica and gain control of her jemerald mines.

"Cancelling Mask Day is the last straw," Coe Jaxon said. "It's time to *do* something about the Kiltish."

"But what can we do?" someone asked.

"I've got a plan," Coe Jaxon answered. "And it has to do with jemeralds."

It was the most amazing plan Storm had ever heard. His heart began to thump with excitement, and a little grin curled the edges of his mouth.

The next night, at midnight, the men would put on their Mask Day masks. Then they'd sneak onto a certain Kiltish ship—the one where all the jemeralds were kept. And then... they'd dump every single jemerald into Tuscamesh Harbor.

"Millions of duckets of Westican jemeralds," Coe Jaxon said, "Dumped to the bottom of Tuscamesh Harbor! At least that way, every Westican jemerald will stay in Westica. Even if they *are* at the bottom of the sea!"

◆◆◆

Coe Jaxon pounded his hammer against the white-hot metal, sending up a shower of bright sparks.

"Absolutely not," he said, lifting the hammer and smashing it down again. "You cannot come along tonight."

It was the next evening, and Storm was standing in the locksmith shop. His father was at the forge, fixing a broken padlock. Storm watched his father's powerful arms flex in the glowing orange light.

"First of all," Coe Jaxon went on, "Those are *secret* plans. You should *not* have been eavesdropping on our meeting. And second of all, you're too young to come along."

"But you don't get it, Dad," Storm answered. "I've *got* to come along. I've *got* to help out..."

"This is serious business, Storm," Coe Jaxon responded. "Skuljagger said he'd shoot anyone caught wearing a mask. Anything can happen out there tonight."

Coe Jaxon put his hands on Storm's shoulders and looked him straight in the eye. "When your mother died, I promised I'd keep you safe. Remember, you're my one and only son. You're all I've got."

"But I can...," Storm began.

"That's it," his father answered firmly, turning back to the forge. The hammer fell again, sending sparks into the air. When Coe Jaxon spoke, his word was final.

Wits looked up from his workbench, and gave Storm a shrug. Storm just shook his head. How could his father expect him to miss out on the most amazing night in Westican history?

Storm and Wits worked together in Jaxon's Locksmith Shop. Storm's great-great-grandfather had founded the shop, over a hundred years before. Before Skuljagger came, Coe Jaxon had been the finest locksmith in Westica. Now, he spent his days swinging a pick in the jemerald mines—while Storm and Wits did their best to keep the shop afloat.

"Dad's crazy," Storm muttered angrily, sitting back down at his workbench. "I've *got* to go along."

Storm snatched up his hammer and got back to work.

"Hey, Storm," Wits said, when Coe Jaxon had left the workshop. "I want to show you something."

Wits walked over and handed Storm an orange ball. Storm could tell it was Wits' newest scientific experiment.

"Don't drop it," Wits said. "It's a homemade hand grenade."

"You're kidding," Storm said, slipping his other hand beneath the grenade. "What's it made out of?"

"You combine homemade bubble gum with the crushed skins of oranges, then add the right amount of extract from the brain of the giant insect," Wits said. "If my theory is right, the stuff should explode on impact. And I mean *really* explode. I haven't tested it yet, but...."

Just then Coe Jaxon walked back into the workshop, and Wits hurried back to his bench. Storm opened up his workbench drawer and hid the grenade inside.

Skuljagger's sword was sitting in there too, beneath some papers and an old white shirt. Earlier that day, Storm had sneaked the sword in without anyone noticing.

The sword glinted in the dim workshop light, and the orange grenade sat right beside it.

Storm grinned.

"I got us *into* all this trouble," he muttered, "And I plan to help get us *out*."

◆◆◆

At five minutes before midnight, Coe Jaxon came down the steps with his mask in his hand. It was a fine green mask, topped with bone and straw hair. Usually, the sight of a mask made Storm think of dancing and stories and juicy bladeback steaks.

But tonight, the mask made him think of *revolution*.

Coe Jaxon put his hand on Storm's shoulder.

"Big things are happening, Storm," he said. "I'm almost *glad* Skuljagger cancelled Mask Day. Because now, we Westicans are finally standing up for the things we believe in. Things like freedom and liberty."

Storm looked down at the floor. His father didn't speak this way very often.

"It's going to be dangerous out there tonight," he went on. "Some of us may not come back. But whatever happens, Storm, always remember... we did what was *right*."

Storm thought he saw his father's eyes clouding up. Coe Jaxon quickly slipped on his mask.

"And, Storm," he added, "I want you in your room tonight. Period."

He slammed the door, and disappeared into the darkness.

Storm always thought twice before he went against his father's word. In fact, there was nothing that Storm dreaded as much as getting in trouble with his father.

But tonight, it was worth the risk.

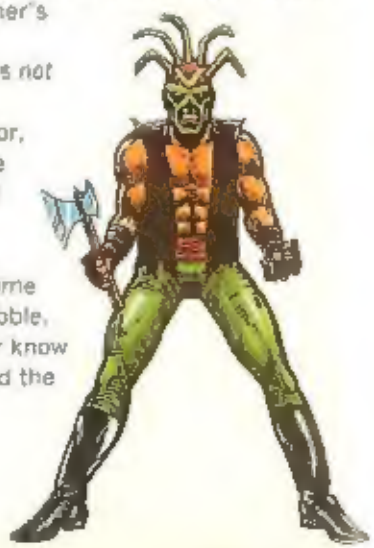
Storm ran upstairs and pulled an old mask from his closet. He put on some old clothes that he hadn't worn in years, and snatched a hatchet from his father's workbench.

This was one night Storm was *not* going to miss.

Before he rushed out the door, Storm pulled Wits' hand grenade from his workbench drawer, and slid it in his pocket. Then he grabbed a fresh piece of home-made gum, took a sip of island-lime juice, and blew a huge green bubble.

"In this get-up, Dad will *never* know it's me," Storm said, as he closed the door behind him.

Storm rushed through the darkened streets, keeping an eye out for Kilbsh warriors. Finally he came to the wharf where the jemerald ship was docked.



"Ingawa!" Storm said, stopping in his tracks and gazing at the scene that spread out before him.

All the Kilbsh sailors were tied to the masts, with gags in their mouths so they couldn't make a sound. Men in green masks moved silently across the ship's deck, swinging orange torches and searching for crates of Westican jemeralds.

Storm smiled and sprinted toward the action.

◆◆◆

Storm lifted his hatchet high above his head, and smashed open another wooden crate. The bright green jemeralds—worth millions of duckets—shone and glistened in the torch-light. Grunting, Storm lifted up the crate and heaved it over the railing. The crate hit the water with a splash.

Tuscamesh Harbor was already covered with wood from demolished crates. A whole ship-load of jemeralds was sitting at the bottom of the Harbor. There'd be a real mess in the morning.

That is, if they lived to see the morning.

"Faster, men, faster!" Coe Jaxon called out.

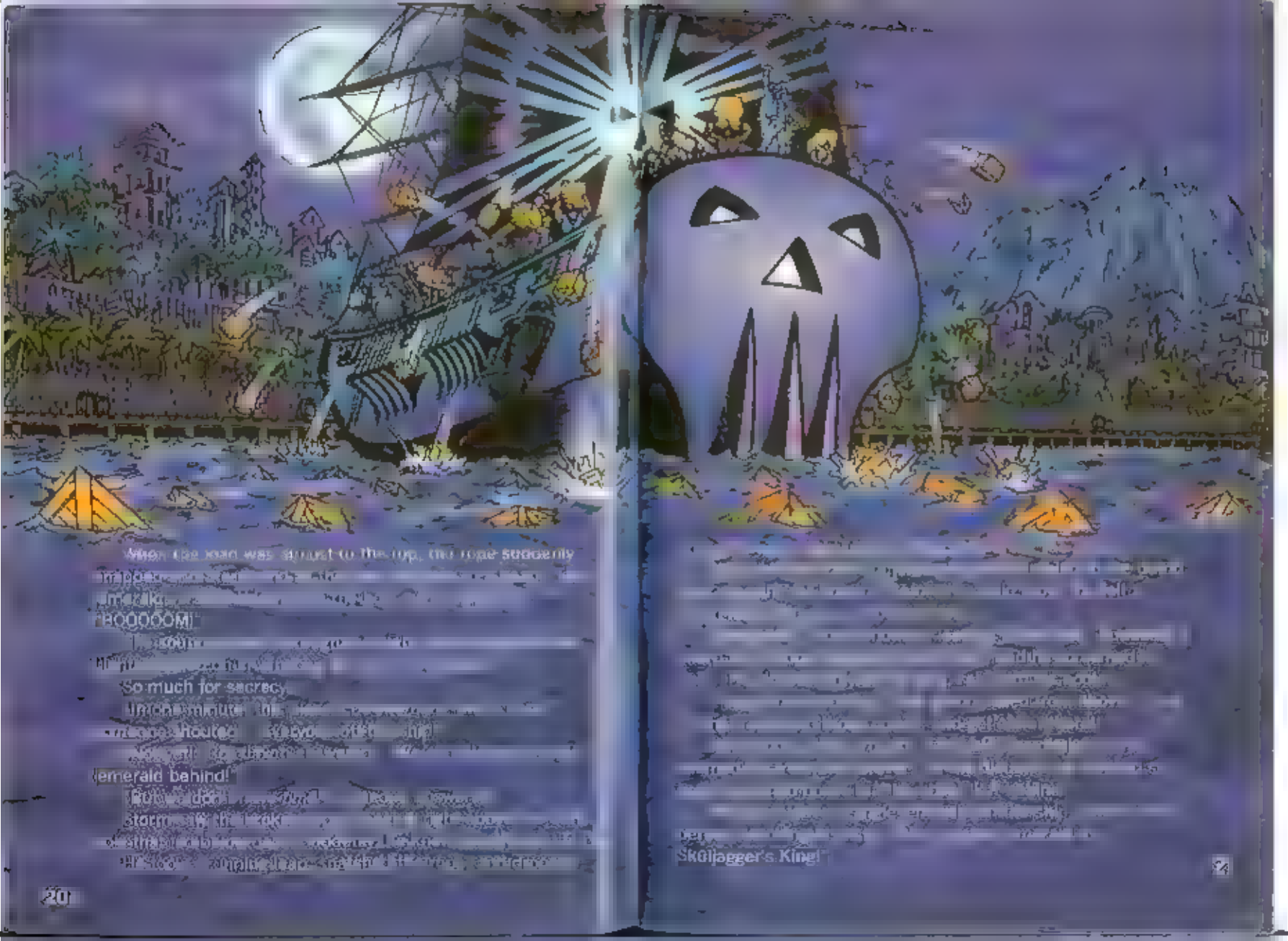
Across the water, the HMS Destruction was coming to life. The Captain of the Destruction had noticed strange movements on the distant jemerald ship. Storm could see the Kilbsh cannons gleaming in the moonlight, and sailors running to battle-stations on the deck.

Storm was just about to smash open a bright red crate—which had the words "Downwright Jemerald Cutters" stamped on its top—when he heard a familiar voice.

"You there," Coe Jaxon called, pointing right at Storm. "Help me pull up these crates. It's the last load!"

Storm slid his hatchet into his belt and ran across the deck. His father, and three other rebels, were pulling on a rope, trying to lift the last crates of jemeralds through the huge opening that led deep into the belly of the ship. The men's bright masks shone in the torchlight. Storm grabbed the end of the rope and pulled with all his might.

"Heave!" the men grunted, pulling on the rope.


When the road was almost to the top, the rope suddenly
BOOOOOM!
So much for secrecy.
emerald behind!
Skuljagger's King!

Storm took off running, leaping over snap-rats and barrels. He climbed to the top of the six green boxes, blew a bubble and looked around the hold for more jemerald crates. But there was nothing but empty barrels and crates lined with cotton. So he jumped down, picked up the jemerald crates, and lugged them over to the hole.

Storm heard a bell ringing out above, and his blood ran cold.

"They just rang the general alarm!" Coe Jaxon shouted. "Whoever you are, work *fast!* The Kilbish are coming!"

Storm let his hands take over. He had tied sailor's knots so many times that he could do it in his sleep. He yanked the knot tight. Then he stood on a purple emerald crate, jumped on it three times for good luck, and blew another bubble.

"Lift me up," he called, trying to make his voice sound different. "And *hurry!*"

Storm heard the men grunt as they pulled the rope, then felt the load of emeralds lift off the floor. His knot seemed to be holding, and he rose higher and higher into the torchlight.

When Storm got to the upper deck, his father reached out and yanked him off the crates. Most of the Westicans had already disappeared into the city. The HMS Destruction was sailing full speed, her cannons ready to fire. Storm could hear Kilbish warriors running toward them through the darkened streets of Tuscamesh.

"You're a real hero, whoever you are," Coe Jaxon said to Storm. "Now GET OUT OF HERE—*FAST!*"

Coe Jaxon leaped off the ship—and Storm was just about to follow—when the HMS Destruction fired off two giant cannon shots. The balls whistled through the air and exploded in the water—soaking Storm to the bone.

Storm noticed three small cannons on the deck. He knew he should run, but he couldn't resist taking a few pot shots at the Destruction. He ran to the first cannon, aimed, and fired. The shot sailed into the night, trailing a tail of fire—then ripped through the massive sails of the Destruction. Storm could hear Kilbish sailors shouting in outrage, and he raised his arms in triumph.

But it was a short triumph. After firing two more rounds, Storm heard Kilbish warriors boarding the jemerald ship.

"There's one!" they shouted, pointing at Storm. "Don't let the vermin escape!"

Rifle shots rang out. Storm ducked behind a barrel, and bullets splintered the wood all around him. He took off running across the deck. When he glanced behind, five warriors were on his tail and gaining fast.

Another round of shots cracked in the air and a bullet ripped through the pocket of Storm's old pants. Wits' homemade gum grenade almost fell to the ground, but Storm grabbed it at the last second. In all the confusion, Storm had forgotten about the grenade.

But he sure did need it now.

"Let's hope your experiment works, Wits," Storm said, tossing the grenade over his shoulder at the charging warriors.

A giant explosion ripped through the night. The impact tossed Storm over the rail of the ship and across the water. He tumbled to the dock, did a somersault, and landed on his feet. Without missing a stride, he turned and sprinted down a dark winding alley.

"Good work, Wits!" Storm thought. "I owe you one!"

For five full minutes, the Kilbish chased him through the streets and alleys of Tuscamesh. They screamed at him, swung chains at him, and shot at him. But Storm knew Tuscamesh like the back of his hand.

He ducked into an alley near his house, and scrambled up the gutter to the roof. As a unit of Kilbish warriors marched by, Storm peered around a chimney, watching them pass.

The warriors were leading someone down the street at gunpoint. The man had a hood around his eyes, and his hands were tied behind his back. The Kilbish pushed him forward.

and the man tumbled to the street.

Storm saw the prisoner's face and gasped.

It was his father.

◆ ◆ ◆

Late that night, Storm was lying awake in bed when he heard a noise downstairs. He watched the Knights Warriors push his father to the ground over and over again. Now that his father had been captured, what would the Knights do with him? Would they keep him in prison forever? Would they hang him?

The house and blacksmith shop were very dark and very quiet. The streets of Tyrannosheesh were quiet, too—except for a slight banging in the wind and the cats that prowled around his window.

Suddenly he heard a voice, deep and low, somewhere in the blacksmith shop downstairs.

Storm's eyes widened with fear. Knowing that his father would never have hidden beneath the covers, Storm grabbed his hatchet, crawled out of bed, and walked slowly downstairs. Beads of cold sweat broke out on his forehead.

"Who's there?" he said, entering the blacksmith shop's lounge.

"Wits, is that you?" Storm asked, his voice cracking. "This isn't *funny*. Trivia?"

When Storm heard the voice again, he knew it wasn't Wits or Trivia. The voice seemed to be saying something, but Storm couldn't understand it. It seemed to be coming from somewhere near his workbench. He walked over, grabbed his workbench drawer, and yanked it open.

A blinding golden light shone forth from the drawer, and Storm flew back, guarding his eyes.

It was the sword.

Storm inched closer and closer, his mouth open with amazement.

And then the sword spoke, in a voice as deep as the ocean.

"Do not be afraid, Storm," the sword said.

Storm rubbed his eyes to make sure he wasn't seeing things. But the sword was still there, glowing in his workbench drawer.

"Pick me up," the sword commanded. "And do not be afraid."

Storm reached his hand into the drawer. He grasped the sword by the handle, then slowly lifted it. The sword felt warm in his hand, as if it were alive. Its light shone only on Storm's face, leaving the rest of the shop in darkness.

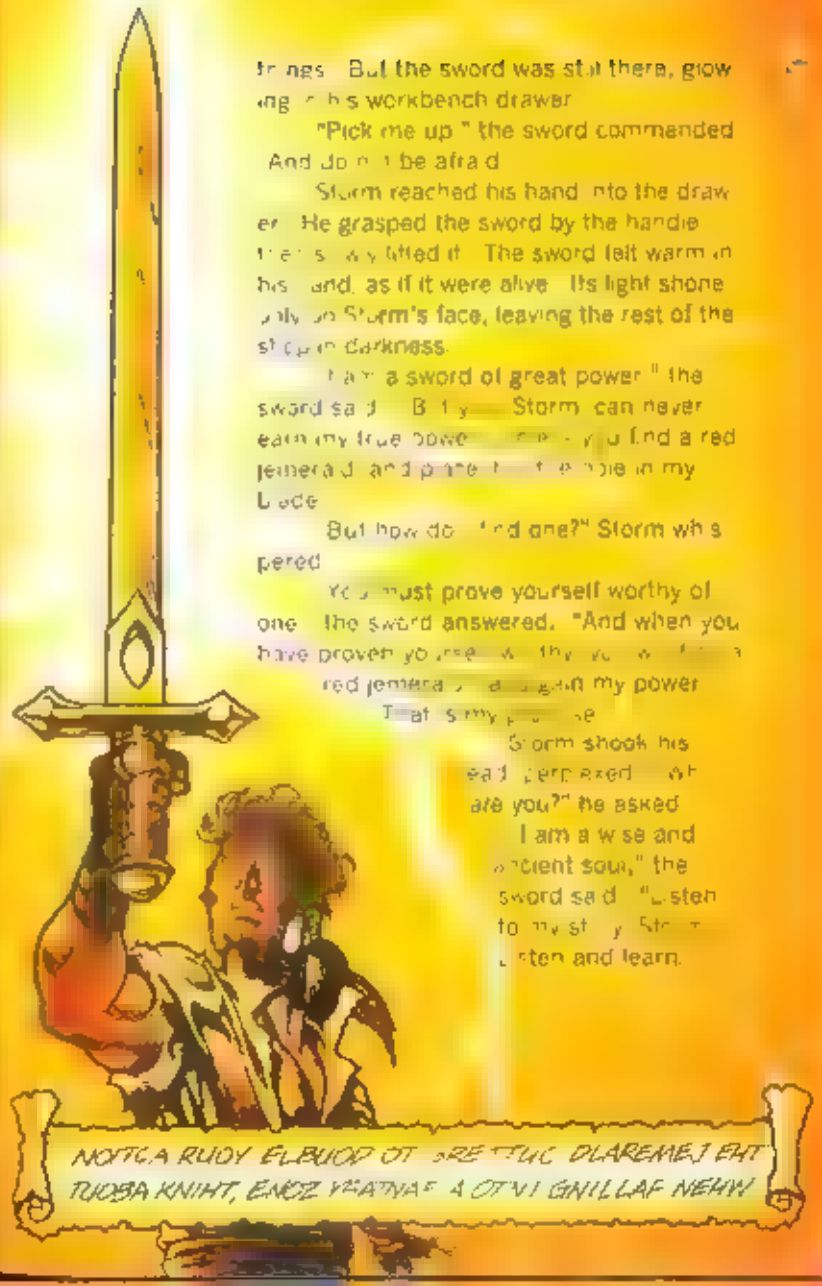
"I am a sword of great power," the sword said. "But only Storm can never learn my true power. Only you find a red jemerald and place it in the hole in my blade."

"But how do I find one?" Storm whispered.

"You must prove yourself worthy of one," the sword answered. "And when you have proven yourself worthy, you will find a red jemerald and regain my power. That is my promise."

Storm shook his head, perplexed. "What are you?" he asked.

"I am a wise and ancient soul," the sword said. "Listen to my story, Storm. Listen and learn."



Storm did listen to the sword's story. And it was the most amazing story he had ever heard.

"Many thousands of years ago, I was the King of a mighty nation called Urnum," the sword told Storm that night. "We were a nation with amazing weapons—plasma-blasters, missiles, and battleships the size of small islands. I ruled half the world, and wanted more."

"But why are you trapped in this sword?" Storm asked.

"I led my people to destruction," the sword answered, with sadness in its voice. "And, as punishment, I was sentenced to live inside a sword."

Storm also learned—to his amazement—that the ruins of Urnum were hidden somewhere on the island of Westica. And that the ruins still contained Urnum's powerful weapons.

"Does Skuljagger know about the weapons?" Storm asked.

"Yes," answered the sword. "But since Captain Skuljagger never earned a red jemerald—and therefore never won my full and true power—he has not yet found the ruins of Urnum." The sword paused. "And—for the good of the whole world—let us hope he never does."

Storm agreed. If Skuljagger ever got his hands on the weapons of Urnum, the entire world would soon be his.

3 SKULJAGGER'S PRISON

"I m told y serious Wits Storm shouted "It s a magic sword—just like I told ya said

"Yeah right," Wits answered with a laugh. "And I can bounce around ins de giant bubbles "

t was the next morning, and the two friends had just opened the locksm th shop. Wits was at the forge pounding wh te hot meta But Storm cou dn't concentrate on his work at all. All he could th nk about was his missing father and the amaz ng sword

f you don t be eve me " Storm said "Then just check th s out " He yanked open his workbenc drawer and pu ed out the sword Its s ver blade caught the bright morning sun

This sword talks, Wits. I'm not kidding. It's the voice of an ancient King the King of Urnum, and Urnum was this Kingdom with incred ble weapons and

Wits turned and walked toward Storm wearing a worried expression. He put his hand on Storm's forehead

You must have a fever Wits said looking into Storm s eyes Have you been bitten by any poisonous insects recently? Were you hit on the head last night?"

Storm slapped Wits hand away

Just then, a shadow passed across the wa l and the two friends spun their heads to the window

"Skuljagger!" Wits screamed He s coming this way!"

Storm didn't have time think He yanked open his workbench drawer, and flung the sword inside, just as Skuljagger came storming through the door

Greetings, vermin!" Skuljagger said He s a ned the door and walked right up to Storm For a mo ent he just stood there so close that Storm could fee the Captain s hot breath His bloodshot eye stared n o Storm like a single deadly dagger

Tel me, boy," Skuljagger whispered, pointing toward Storm s workbench. "What did you just hide in that drawer? Hmm?

"N-Nothing," Storm answered

"NO H NG?! Skuljagger screamed grabb ng Storm by the collar and lifting him off the ground "Don't *lie* to me, you insect! I could feed you to the battle-dogs!"

Skuljagger dropped Storm and pulled open the workbench drawer Wits was standing by the forge his eyes wide with terror Storm got ready to kiss himself goodbye

"What have we *here*?" Skuljagger asked, reaching into the drawer.

He pulled out a gnarly branch covered with twigs and leaves.

Storm and Wits could hardly believe their eyes. The sword had saved their skins.

Skuljagger hurled the branch to the floor in anger. Then he picked Storm up again and pinned him right against the wall. Storm's boots were two feet off the floor. He could barely breathe.

"Your father—Coe Jaxon—is my prisoner," Skuljagger said. "He was one of the bug brains who dumped all my lovely emeralds into Tuscamesh Harbor last night. And unless you tell me everything you know, I will eliminate your father. And I will eliminate him *tonight*! Do you understand, boy?

"But I don't . . ." Storm began.

"Shut up!" Skuljagger cried. "Just tell me how many Westicans are gathering at the lighthouse!"

"I don't know!" Storm answered truthfully.

"THAT'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH!" Skuljagger screamed, lifting Storm even higher. "I've heard reports that five hundred Westicans are gathering at the lighthouse near the village of Siksup. And they're planning to put up a fight—against the mighty Skuljagger!"

"I don't know *anything*!" Storm said, gasping for breath.

Skuljagger snarled but let Storm drop to the floor. He slowly straightened his collar, and pulled his gloves onto his long, bony fingers. Then he smiled a slow and evil grin.

"Six hours," Skuljagger said. "Six hours is all your father has left to live. And not a second more."

The Captain laughed, then spun around and left, slamming the door behind him.

◆◆◆

Later that morning, Storm, Wits and Trina held a secret meeting in the locksmith shop. Storm was pacing back and forth across the floor, lost in thought. He knew they needed a plan. If they didn't do *something*—and do something fast—his father was history.

But how could they rescue him in time?

"I've got a plan!" Storm said at last. "Grab your crossbows and follow me."

Storm snatched the sword, and headed confidently for the door. Trina and Wits followed behind.

But the truth was, Storm *didn't* have a plan.

It was typical Storm Jaxon. Just start doing something—and a plan would soon develop.

The three friends sneaked through the alleys and out of Tuscamesh. Skuljagger's prison was deep in the jungles of Westica. A road cut through the jungle and went straight to the prison. The only problem was, the road was patrolled by Kilush warriors and Black Masks.

"I know a secret path," Wits said, leading them forward. "I used it when I hunted for bats and frogs and insects. It's the best way to Skuljagger's prison. But watch out for bladebacks."

The path went through the deepest, most dangerous part of the jungle. The bright Westican sun shone through the leaves, making shifting patterns on the jungle floor. Occasionally, they heard the strange cry of a claw bird in the distance, echoing off the sharp hills.

"Keep quiet," Wits said. "Kilush patrols are everywhere. If we make too much noise, we'll be ambushed for sure."

Storm heard a branch snap in the trees, and stopped cold. He gripped his sword more tightly. Wits yanked an arrow from his quiver. Trina crouched down, her crossbow ready to fire.

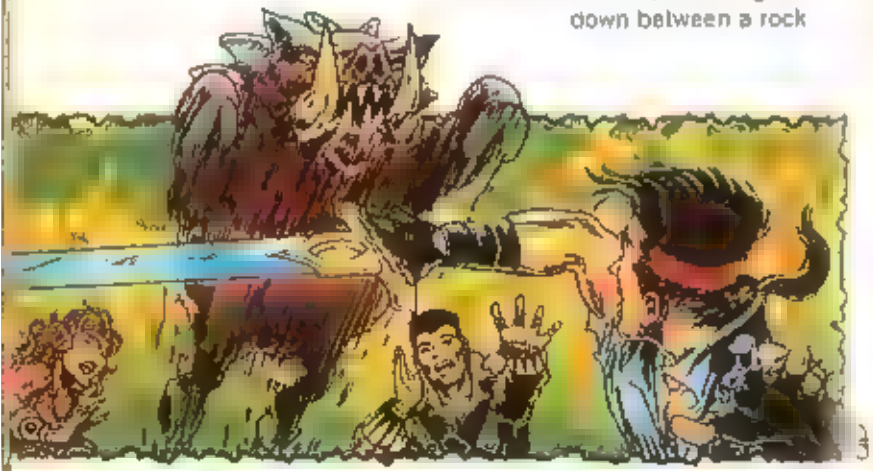
For a moment, the jungle was quiet. Nothing could be heard but the faraway cry of a claw bird.

"*Bladebacks!*" Storm screamed.

Two wild beasts came crashing through the underbrush. They charged at the three friends, their sharp tusks leading the way. The bladebacks had razor-sharp fins all along their backs—fins which could slice through bone.

"Storm, behind you!" Wits shouted.

Storm spun around just as a third bladeback leaped into the air. He swung his sword and caught the bladeback on the shoulder. The wounded beast charged ahead and smashed into Storm's chest, knocking him down between a rock



and a giant coconut. Storm's sword fell from his hand and the angry bladeback charged again.

Just then a shot rang out.

The bladebacks—terrified of gunfire—stopped in their tracks. When another shot cracked through the jungle, the bladebacks turned and fled, screaming as they went.

"Who shot the guns?" Storm asked, climbing to his feet. He had a bad feeling in his gut.

Just then a bullet deflected off a branch right beside Trina's head, and the three friends hit the dirt.

"It's a Kitsh patrol!" Trina said. "They heard us!"

It was out of the frying pan, and into the fire.

Run!" Storm shouted.

They leaped forward and sprinted across the jungle floor. Storm could see two warriors up ahead, their steel masks gleaming in the sun. The warriors disappeared behind the trees.

Trina loaded her crossbow as she ran.

A shot suddenly ripped through Storm's shirt, grazing his skin. He yanked his head around and saw a steel-masked face not more than twenty feet away. The warrior charged, his bayonet leading the way like a battle lance.

Storm knocked the bayonet away with a sword swipe, and the sound of metal meeting metal echoed through the trees. The warrior swung for Storm's head, but Storm ducked and leaped to the side.

"Pretty quick, boy," the warrior laughed.

Storm swiped his sword, swinging with all his might. The warrior deflected the blade with a quick, effortless spin. But as the warrior turned to strike back, he fell off balance. Storm saw his opportunity, and finished off the warrior with a single swipe.

But he didn't have time to rest.

"Help!" Wits called. "I'm *trapped*!"

Storm spun around. Wits had fallen into a bladeback trap, and his boot was pinned in the trap's metal jaws. Wits couldn't move an inch. Storm saw the second Kitsh warrior burst from the jungle and bring his rifle to his shoulder.

Wits shouted in helpless terror, as the warrior took careful aim at his chest.

Storm didn't have time to think. All he knew was that Wits—his best friend in the world—was about to be shot. In a flash, Storm leaped in front of Wits as the Kitsh warrior pulled the trigger.

A shot rang out.

Storm felt something smash into his chest. Then the whole world went suddenly black.

with a guard tower at each corner. From the towers, guards scanned the jungle with long binoculars. Storm counted about two hundred prison windows—and wondered how he'd ever find his father in time.

Not to mention how he'd get out alive.

"I think I should go in alone," Storm said, turning to Wits and Trina.

"*Forget it!*" Wits and Trina started.

"I'm *serious*," Storm answered. "This is definitely a one man job. And I need you both to keep watch. If the guards spot me, cry out like a crawbird. That way I'll know I'm in trouble."

Trina and Wits nodded reluctantly.

"Good luck, Storm," Trina said.

"Ingawa," Wits said, slapping Storm on the shoulder.

Storm smiled, grabbed his sword, and set off.

At first, he stayed behind longer trees, sneaking closer and closer to the prison walls. When the trees ran out, he crouched down and zigzagged from position to position. Finally, he stopped behind a fence not more than thirty feet from an open window. If he could leap through that window, he'd be deep in the heart of Skuljagger's prison.

The only problem was, a Kirish guard was marching back and forth in front of the window.

It all came down to perfect timing. Storm waited for the guard to turn around, then burst toward the prison. Just when the guard was about to turn back, Storm took a hop and a skip—then jumped head first through the open window.

It was a perfect jump—except for one thing. On the way through the window, the sword clanged against the wall.

Storm tumbled to the floor inside, then sprang to his feet. Outside, he heard Wits and Trina call out like frantic crawbirds.

"Here we go again!" he said. He turned and ran into the hallway, slapping his legs in frustration.

The prison was cold and dim. Long stone hallways led off in all directions, lit by glowing torches. Storm had no idea where to go, so he made the first turn and rushed down a stairway.

The alarm bell sounded throughout the prison. Storm slid

around a corner on one foot, and sprinted forward.

There he is! A group of Black Masks shouted behind him.

Storm spun around and fired a power ball from the sword. The power ball exploded in front of the Black Masks, sending up a sheet of flame which blocked the hallway.

"Yes!" Storm shouted.

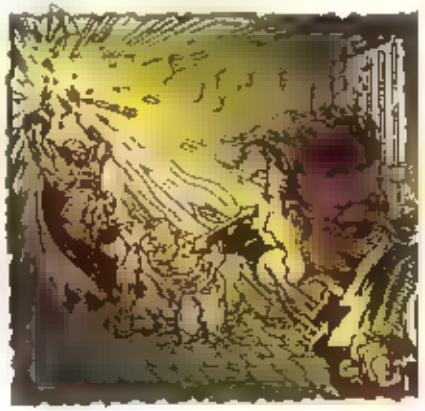
He spun around a dark corner, flew down another flight of steps, and rushed toward an open doorway lit with light. As he approached the light, Storm heard Skuljagger's voice.

"I've been waiting all day to do this," Skuljagger laughed. "Any last words, Coe Jaxon?"

Then Storm heard his father's voice call out, loud and strong.

"I did it all for Westica!"

Storm had never run faster in all his life. He slid to a stop in front of the door just as Skuljagger lifted up his giant battle axe. Coe Jaxon was kneeling on the ground, bare chested, with his hands tied behind his back. No one else was in the execution chamber.



"Dad!" Storm screamed. He pointed the sword at Skuljagger and shot a power ball. Skuljagger spun his head around in time to see the shot and ducked. But the power ball hit his battle axe and shattered it into a thousand pieces. Skuljagger dropped to the floor, dazed by the massive surge of energy.

Storm ran to his father, cut the ropes, and set him free. But Skuljagger was coming back to life. He shook his head like a stunned bear, and climbed slowly to his feet.

"Storm...!" Coe Jaxon exclaimed.

"We'll talk later, Dad," Storm said. "It's time to *run*."

They sprinted out the door and ran down the hallway with

Skuljagger following right behind. The prison was a mass of confusion. Storm knew that if they could make it to the back exit, they stood a chance of sneaking out alive.

"That's my sword—Skuljagger screamed. "I *must* have it back!"

Warriors and sailors and Black Masks chased them up the stairs and down the torch-lit halls, hurling chains and firing rifles. Storm spun around and fired off a couple of powerballs, but they sailed wide and missed their targets.

"Head for that door, Dad!" Storm yelled.

They rushed out the door and into the blinding light of day. Storm jumped on a barrel and aimed the sword at a huge white pillar which held up a stone balcony. He had to shoot the pillar with seven powerballs before it collapsed—completely blocking the door. Storm could hear the Kiltish warriors yelling behind the mass of rubble, trapped.

A split second later, Storm and his father disappeared into the jungle. They met Trina and Wits behind a palm bush and—without saying a single word—ran off toward Tuscamesh.

◆ ◆ ◆

After sneaking silently past Kiltish jungle patrols, the four rebels stopped to rest by a clear blue stream. Evening was falling, and all around them the jungle dissolved into darkness.

"Well..." Coe Jaxon said, bending to drink the water. "I guess you proved me wrong, Storm. You are old enough to help. You three saved my life."

Storm blushed with pride.

"All three of you should have come along on the Mask Day Rebellion," Coe Jaxon said. "You can never have too much bravery."

"Uh..., Dad, about the Mask Day Rebellion...," Storm began, wearing a little grin. "I was *actually*—"

The sound of distant gunfire interrupted Storm mid-sentence, and everyone stopped short. Coe Jaxon cocked his ear toward the sea, heard more gunfire, and pulled the three friends together.

"Listen up," Coe Jaxon began. "As you know, an army of Westicans is gathering at the lighthouse near the village of Siksup. While I was in prison, I overheard the Kiltish battle-plan—

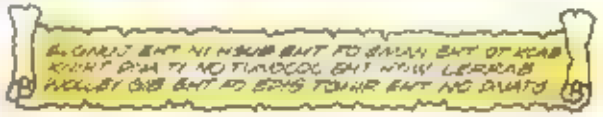
Skuljagger is going to attack at dawn. I'm heading there now to warn them."

Coe Jaxon turned to Wits and Trina.

"You two, run into the countryside and make sure all able bodied Westicans get to the lighthouse. Storm, you run to Tuscamesh and do the same. Take the short cut across the old piers and bridges—but keep an eye out for Black Masks. Tell the people we need all the fighters we can get. We're planning to wage war against Skuljagger!"

Storm nodded and sprinted into the darkening jungle, his fists clenched, his jaw set tight.

"The fun's just beginning," Storm muttered to himself.



Storm met Black-Masks and warriors along the piers that led to Tuscamesh, and the comet-like flash of powerballs streaked through the Westican night. When Storm had cleared a path before him, he ran with all the strength of a seasoned soldier—to carry the message of battle to Tuscamesh.

Every able-bodied fighter in Tuscamesh needed to know about the plan.

And they need to get to the lighthouse—<u>fast</u>.

4 THE WAR BEGINS

Storm was the only soul on Clawbird Road.

As he ran across the cobblestones, his boots echoed through the streets as if he were in an empty cavern. On a normal evening, Clawbird Road would have been bustling with Jemerald miners and Kiltish warriors and farmers pushing fruit carts home from market. But tonight, every window was shuttered, and every door barred tight.

A window flung open above him.

"What are you doing out there, Storm?" a woman whispered.

"Mrs. Oboschnozkobov!" Storm said, screeching to a stop. "I'm carrying a message. Everyone who can fight should hurry to the lighthouse now. Skuljagger's going to attack at dawn."

"Didn't you hear?" Mrs. Oboschnozkobov whispered. "Skuljagger put all of Tuscamesh on military alert. Anyone found in the streets will be shot on sight. No questions asked."

Mr. Oboschnozkobov appeared behind his wife.

"Thanks for the message, Storm," he said, pulling on his coat. "I'll see you at the lighthouse."

Storm turned and ran down the street, knocking on doors and spreading the word. As the message got around, he saw Westicans sneak out of back doors, sneak down alleys and creep out to the edges of the jungle. The lighthouse was only two miles away—but those two miles were patrolled by the Kiltish. Every few minutes, Storm heard gunfire in the distance. He could only hope that most of the Westican refugees made it to the lighthouse alive.

Storm zig-zagged down the alleyways, leaping over barrels and crates. By now the moon had risen, and he figured it was time to get to the lighthouse. But as he ran through Tuscamesh, he yelled at the top of his voice:

"Everyone meet at the lighthouse! And bring all the weapons you have!" Storm screamed as he left behind the final buildings of Tuscamesh and ran headlong into the nighttime jungle.

♦ ♦ ♦

The Westican army—if you could call it an army—was camped in the darkness near the lighthouse. It was a ragtag collection of farmers and

shopkeepers, with a few young boys and white-haired old men thrown in for good measure. They didn't have wood for campfires, or even food for a simple dinner. All they had were pitchforks, scythes, old crossbows—and a burning desire to be free.

Storm could see the Kiltish campfires in the distance. It seemed as if a thousand orange flames were dancing in the night. And Storm knew that five Kiltish warriors—maybe more—were standing beside each fire, and that each of those warriors had enough food and ammunition to last a long, long campaign. Every now and then, Storm heard the sound of soaring Kiltish battle dogs. He even heard the soulful laughter drift toward him on the wind.

But there was no laughter on the Westican side. Every able-bodied man was busy digging a long, deep trench—to prepare for the attack that would come with the first light of dawn.

That night, Storm was digging beside Mrs. Tuna and Coe Jaxon. As he worked, Storm told his father about the sword.

"On the night you were captured," Storm said, tossing a shovelful of dirt over his shoulder, "I heard this voice down in the locksmith shop. When I went downstairs, I found the sword glowing in my drawer. And the sword told me its whole story. See, it's the voice of the King of Urnum. And Urnum was this ancient civilization that had invented terrible weapons—but it destroyed itself. The ruins of the lost city of Urnum are somewhere on Westica. And some of the amazing weapons are still in the ruins. And the King also said that—"

Wits dropped his shovel. "Storm!" he shouted. "It's so simple! Why didn't I think of this earlier? All we have to do is find the ruins of Urnum, and we can grab all the weapons. Then we can destroy the Kiltish."

"Yeah...," Storm said, getting excited.

"Sorry, men," Coe Jaxon said. He pointed to the eastern sky, which was turning light with dawn. "There's no time. The Kiltish will be attacking soon. We can't have you tramping all over Westica, searching for some lost city." Coe Jaxon lifted his binoculars to his eyes, and gazed toward the distant fires.

" can see the K tish gett ng into pos tion now. We ll need every ast person here to fight "

Storm got back to work. A few moments ater, a batt e cry pierced the dawn. The K tish Army held the r long battle-ban ners aloft n the wind. Capta n Skullagger was in front, wielding a sword and a g ant battle axe. Storm fe t a chi of fear shoot up his spine. Skullagger et out a scream and the whole ong ine of K tish warriors began marching slowly toward them.

Storm knew that the West can army was in a bad pos tion. The o ean was behind them. Even now Storm cou d hear waves crashing against the rocky beach. And in front of them was the mighty Kiltish Army, closing in.

The Westicans were trapped in the m dd'e.

"Everyone nto battle position!" Coe Jaxon cried out.

All the Westicans dropped their shovels and picked up the r weapons. They lined up along the half-finished trench, stared out over the top—and waited.

"Storm there s someth ng I want to tell you before the bat tle starts." Coe Jaxon said, taking Storm by the shou ders. "A week ago I would never have a lowed you to be here. I wou d have sa d you were too young. But you ve proven that you re worthy and I m proud of you." Coe Jaxon turned his head and gazed across the empty field. "Now get ready Storm. Here they come."

The K tish broke nto a trot, scream ng as they advanced across the battlefield. The soft ight of dawn was ref ected n their steel masks and sharpened bayonets.

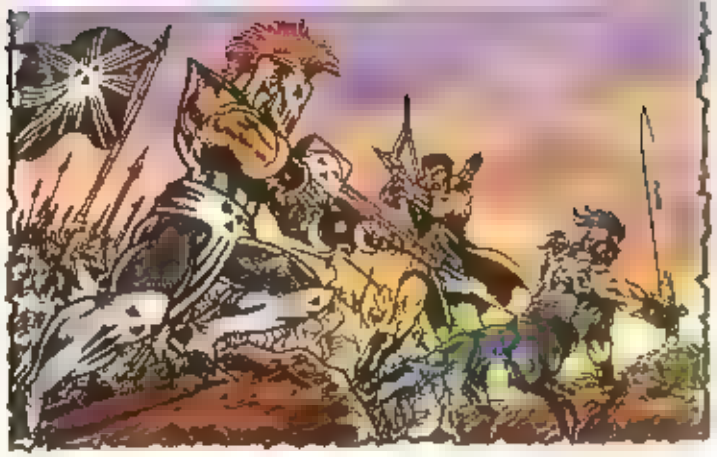
The first cannonball whist ed past Storm's ears and explod ed in the dirt behind him. Then a thousand r fles fired at once ra ning the West can trenches with bullets. Storm fired a power ball fro m his sword and watched a warr or disappear in a cloud of smoke. The K tish kept advanc ng, one man after the other. Storm g anced down t e trench and saw that some Westicans had already fallen. He turned back to the battle field and released anoth er power ball. The shouts of battle grew louder.

"Storm watch out!" W ts screamed.

Storm spun around just in time to see a warrior charging at him from the side. Storm shot a power ball but it sailed above the warrior's head. The warrior lunged at Storm with his bayo net. Storm fell back against the trench in terror, ready for a desperate duel.

But an arrow p erced the Kiltish armor just in time—and the warrior crumpled into the tren .

Storm looked over to Wits.



"I owed you one, Storm," Wits said, with a little nod.

The Kiltish advanced, inch by inch. They shot their rifles, reloaded, moved forward, and shot again. Some Westicans leaped from the trench and fought the Kiltish hand to hand. The air was filled with screams, gunfire, smoke, and the sound of metal against metal. Cannonballs continued to bombard the Westican line, spraying deadly shrapnel through the trenches.

Storm peppered the battlefield with power balls. Next to the massive Kiltish cannons, Storm's sword was the most fearsome weapon on the battlefield. The sword's red fire-balls of energy sliced through the air, spinning toward their victims with a sound like a flaming forge.

And yet, Storm wished the sword could do even more. He wished it could cover the entire battlefield with fire, and silence the Kiltish cannons with a single giant flame-ball.

"Faster, faster!" Storm shouted at the sword, trying to shoot more and more power balls. "Come on, sword! Shoot faster!"

"Storm!" the sword said, in its deep and powerful voice, "My powers are limited. You must be brave!"

After a half hour of heavy hand-to-hand fighting, the tide of the battle began to turn. Storm saw Kiltish warriors fall to Westican arrows, pitchforks, and swords. The raw courage of the rebels began to push the Kiltish back—inch by inch.

"The Kiltish didn't expect *this*, did they?" Trina said, grinning as she placed another arrow in her crossbow.

Just then the Kiltish horn sounded for retreat, and all the warriors spun on their heels and ran for camp. A shout of triumph rose from the Westican trenches. Storm lifted his sword and let out an enormous whoop.

But Coe Jaxon was not celebrating. "They'll be back," he shouted down the trench. "And they'll be back with battle dogs, cannons, and twice as much fire power. You can count on *that*." He threw down his crossbow and picked up his shovel. "Everyone who's not tending the wounded, get back to work on the trench. This battle is *not* over yet!"

A soldier came running through the trenches.

"Coe!" the soldier said, out of breath. "A unit of Black Masks has captured the lighthouse. They're setting up sniper positions in the windows!"

Storm turned to look at the ancient lighthouse, which had been built by an early Westican leader—D. Elar. It was a tall thin building topped with a spinning spotlight. For three hundred years it had guarded the rugged coast near Siksup, and its rough Westican stones were battered from sea storms. If a unit of Black Masks got control of the tower, they could trap the Westican army in a deadly crossfire.

"I'm going in," Storm said, leaping over the trench. "Someone's got to take care of those Black Masks."

"Wait, Storm!" Coe Jaxon began. "That's pretty dangerous work. I think you'd better stay here and..."

"Dad," Storm interrupted, "Today you told me that I'd proved I was worthy—and that means I can make my own decisions." Storm gripped his sword. "And I've decided to take out those Black-Masks."

Coe Jaxon smiled, raised his hand and said, "Ungawa!"

"That's *ingawa*, Dad," Storm laughed, slapping his father's hand as hard as he could.

◆◆◆

He ached down the ha of the ghthouse keeping his back to the stone wa n the stairwe up ahead Storm could see the dark out ne of a Black Mask sentry The sentry s rifle barrel g nted in the ght from an open window

For the first time that day, Storm felt scared

He passed by a window and glanced down at the Westcan countrys de far be ow A giant vo cano—ca ec ol dar s Cap—rose above the ag es sending a wisp of vapor from its crater The Updown Mountains marched n and ke a massive army of stone n the d stance. Storm could see the buildings of Tuscamesh glowing n the warm morning sun

Suddenly he remembered what a the f ght ng was for "West ca " he whispered and courage flowed through him like fire

Storm took a step, and the floorboard creaked

"Hey " the sentry shouted spinning and lowering his rifle

Bu Storm shot first The power ball spun down the ha and struck the top of the doorway Stones came crashing down on top of the sentry

"So much for *sneaking* upstairs." Storm muttered, as the sound echoed through the bui ding

Storm heard B ack Mask sh pers running across the floor above h m He ducked beh nd a wa just as the Black Masks rushed down the steps

There he s they shouted squeezing off rounds from their massive rifles. The bullets shattered Storm's wall, and he squinted in the flying debris

Storm was trapped

"He s got the captain's sword!" a Black Mask cried

Storm not ced the white p ars that held up the ghthouse s roof He jumped onto a dark brown crate, aimed at the white p ar n the corner, and shot a power ball

"Come on sword," Storm said shooting again. "Faster!"

On the fifth power ball the white pillar finally collapsed. Then the roof began to buck e and stones tumb ed from above

"See you guys later," Storm shouted, as he rolled across the floor to the top of the next stairwell. He leaped down the steps

in a single graceful bound—followed by a stream of Kiltish bullets. Landing with a thud, he did a somersault, then ducked down beside a barrel.

The ceiling collapsed on top of the Black Masks with a sound like roaring thunder The whole lighthouse shook, as if it were made of flimsy wood Storm covered his head, closed his eyes, and ducked. But the ceiling above him held firm—and Storm fell back against the wall happy just to be alive

A moment later the sword's voice broke the sudden silence

"You are a brave soldier," the sword said. "*Very* brave. But bravery is ol enough Your nation is in danger of los ng the war. You must listen to me, if you wish to survive "

Storm sat up and held the sword, still breathing hard

"I will help you find the lost city of Urnum," the sword said "If you are strong—and lucky you may discover Urnum before the Kiltish destroy your army and burn your houses to the ground."

I can leave the battle Storm said firmly "The Westcans need me—and *you*."

"As you wish," the sword said "It is your decision, and yours alone "

Storm sighed then glanced out of the window toward the sea. Suddenly his heart skipped a beat. Two massive Kiltish battleships were approaching the coast under full sa n a few hours they d be w th n easy firing range of the Westcan army

Storm tossed a piece of homemade gum into his mouth and blew a green bubble

"Visitors." he muttered "They always show up at the wrong time."

◆◆◆

At four o'clock that afternoon, the Kiltish attacked.

A fire storm of cannonballs crashed in from the battleships splintering the Westican trenches. This time, the Kiltish troops were led by an army of two-headed battle-dogs. The fierce Kiltish dogs—with powerful jaws and teeth-rifying snarls—ripped through the Westican lines like demons.

The Westicans were finally feeling the full measure of Skuljagger's wrath. And Storm was beginning to worry.

"Dogs," Trina screamed, falling back against the dirt as a battle dog leaped across the trench, its jaws snarling and drooping. Storm wheeled around and vaporized the two-headed beast—just as it was about to sink its teeth into Trina's neck.

But there were simply too many battle dogs, too many cannonballs, too many warriors, too many Kiltish bayonets.

After an hour of battle, the Westicans fled for their lives to the rocky beach behind the lighthouse. The darkness of night was the only thing that saved the rebels from final destruction.

"Darkness only lasts till morning," Coe Jaxon shouted, as the Westican army dug in. "Tomorrow, we're going to have to fight for our lives."

EGNAR NIATNUOM EHT TUOBA KNIHT DNA HSEMALSUT NI LERRAB HTHF EHT NO DNATS.

Things looked bad.

Extremely bad.

Out at sea, the battleships swayed against the moonlit sky. Inland, Storm could hear the rumble of artillery rolling into place. Once again the orange fires of the Kiltish Army dotted the battlefield, and the sound of snarling battle-dogs drifted in on the breeze. And once again the Westicans had no wood for fires, no food for their hungry soldiers.

The Westicans were trapped. Without a miracle, the rebel army could not survive another day of battle.

"I'm going to Urnum," Storm said, gripping the sword. "I got Westica into this mess, and I plan to get her out."

Wits and Trina looked at each other and shook their heads. It was typical Storm Jaxon. How could anyone expect to sneak through the Kiltish lines, plunge into the dark jungles, discover the ruins of a lost city, and bring back an arsenal of ancient weapons—all by the next morning?

If anyone could, Storm could.

5 the TRIP to URNUM

The ruins of Urnum lie in the crater of the great volcano.

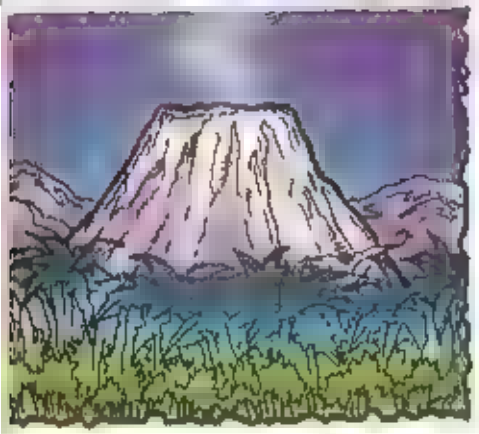
Storm couldn't believe his ears. "*What* did you say?" he asked, gazing at the sword.

The sword answered in a voice as strong as the crashing waves. "The ruins of Urnum lie in the crater of the great volcano."

"Do you mean the volcano we call Lilidar's Cap?" Storm asked. He sent a worried glance toward Wits and Trina.

"Yes," the sword answered.

"But that's *impossible*," Wits said, stepping forward. "You can't build a city in a volcano. It would be burned to a crisp



Storm, Trina and Wits were crouched in a cave near the beach. All around them the Westican army slept in the sand. In a sad voice, the sword told them the story of Urnum.

"We learned to harness the power of the great volcano," the sword began. "And I, as King, could have turned that power to good use. Under my rule, the whole world might have prospered. But instead, I only wanted to increase my own power. And because of my greed, I brought my people—and the whole world—to terrible destruction."

Suddenly, Storm felt the sword grow cold in his hand.

"You're freezing," Storm said, tossing the sword to his other hand. "What's wrong?"

"You must understand," the sword answered. "I have not returned to Urnum for five thousand years. There will be ghosts in the streets, and spirits in the ruins. Creatures will attack and torment me. For I caused incredible destruction."

"Maybe we shouldn't go," Trina said, turning pale.

"You must go!" the sword answered. "It is your only hope."

Storm glanced at his friends. Trina was pale. Wits' hands were shaking.

"Maybe I should go alone," Storm said. "You two can stay here and help with—"

"Not a chance," Wits said, trying to look courageous. "I wouldn't miss this for the world," Trina added.

Storm sighed. "Ungawa!" he said.

"Ungawa," Trina and Wits answered.

◆◆◆

The three friends sneaked through a rocky ravine that cut right through the middle of the Kilt shines, careful not to make a single sound. Once, Trina slipped on a stone and started a small avalanche. But the kilt shi didn't seem to hear a thing.

As soon as they entered the jungle, they took off running along an old worn path. Until the sound of the sea had faded and the Kilt shi fires had disappeared.

They stopped by a stream, out of breath.

"I'm starting to get a strange feeling," Trina said.

"Uh-oh," Storm said, stopping short. "It's Trina's sixth sense."

"Someone's following us," Trina said.

"Following us?" Wits asked. "Who?"

"No one's following us," Storm said. "We've been running for ten minutes, and we haven't heard a thing."

"Maybe there are bladebacks around here," Wits said, pulling an arrow from his quiver. "Maybe *that's* who's following us."

"Maybe...," Trina answered.

They started walking through the pitch-dark jungle, their ears alert to every sound. Storm had never been in this part of the Westican wilderness. It was called the Lost Jungle because anyone who traveled there got lost—and usually ended up as a quick dinner for a hungry bladeback.

The jungle was quiet, except for the distant screeching of giant insects. Storm had heard tales of strange beasts that inhabited the Lost Jungle. But he didn't believe them. Or at least he didn't *want* to believe them.

The sword's voice broke the silence. "Leave the path and enter the jungle. Turn right toward the finger tree. Then three lefts and another right. There you will find a bridge across a raging river."

They left the path and walked quietly through the jungle following the sword's directions. Finally they arrived at the edge of a gorge. At the bottom of the gorge was a raging river.

"Here's the bridge!" Trina cried.

Storm felt his face go pale. It was a high, thin, rickety bridge made of rope and wood. Trina tested the rope with a tug.

The rope began to fray, and a moment snapped in two.

"No one has crossed this bridge in five thousand years," Wits said. "We'll definitely need stronger rope."

"Hey, *you're* the genius, Wits," Storm said. "*You* figure it out."

Wits disappeared into the jungle. A moment later he returned with a bundle of finger tree moss. Storm and Trina watched in amazement as Wits wove the moss into a long, thin rope.

"Do you think it'll be strong enough?" Trina asked.

Wits just shrugged. "I guess we'll cross that bridge when we come to it."

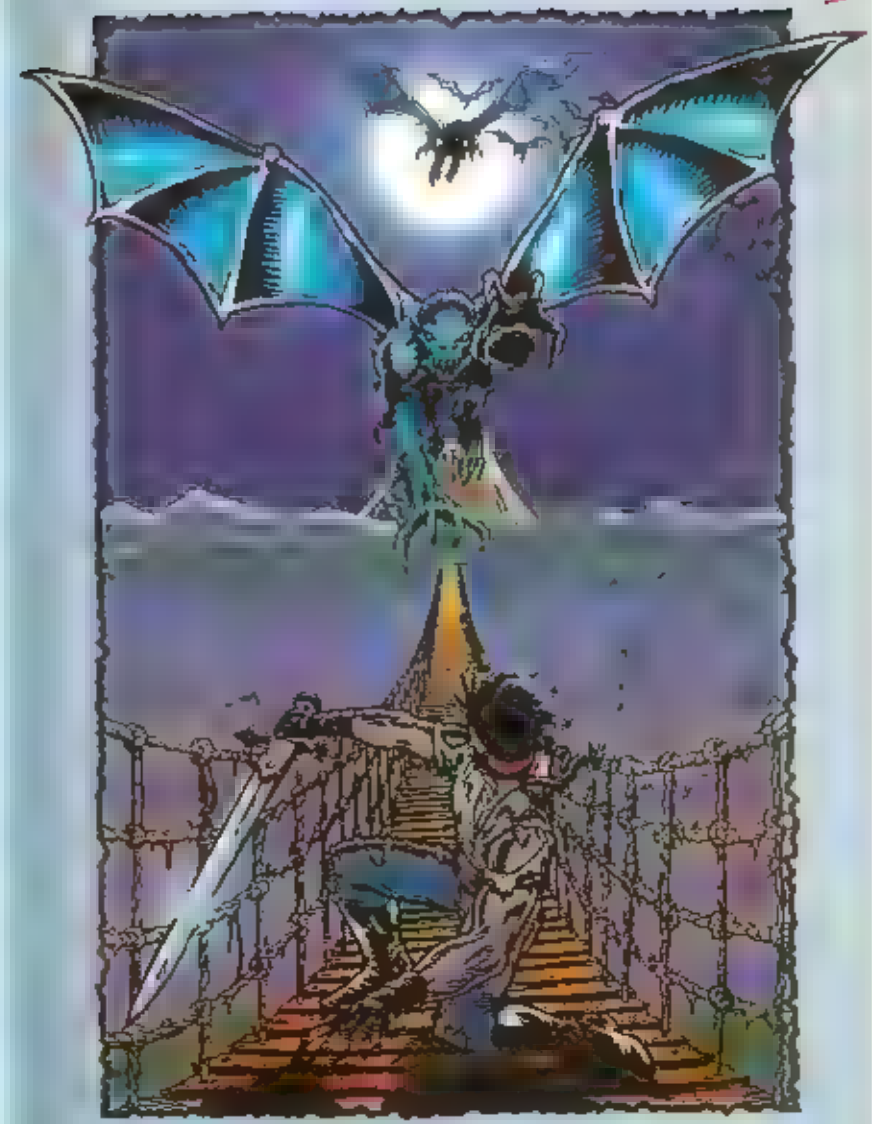
Storm rolled his eyes. He snatched the rope from Wits' hands, tied it around a tree, and stepped out onto the bridge. The bridge swung wildly back and forth and up and down, and Storm almost tumbled into the river far below. But he caught himself, and began to wrap the new rope around the old.

Wits and Trina followed right behind, inch by inch.

When they were halfway across the bridge, a screaming sound came down from the sky.

"Flying monkeys!" Storm shouted, ducking as a monkey buzzed his head. The beasts had razor sharp claws which unfurled to snatch their prey.

Storm saw a swarm of monkeys in the sky above. He aimed the sword and shot a power ball. The flame streaked through the night and exploded like a bomb in the center of the swarm. The monkeys fell from the sky and disappeared into the mists of the raging river.



"Behind you!" Trina shouted.

Storm spun around and plucked a monkey in the chest just as it was about to sink its claws into his back. The monkey screamed and vaporized in a flash of fire.

Another swarm of monkeys appeared in the sky, and the three friends took off across the bridge. As their feet pounded the planks, Storm felt one of the old ropes start to break. The bridge began to tilt, and they slid toward the edge.

"It's *breaking*!" Wits screamed. "Jump for the other side!"

They leaped just as the rope snapped and the bridge gave way beneath them. Storm slammed against the wall of the gorge and grabbed hold of a thin tree with his one free hand. But Wits fell short, pawing desperately at the air. At the last moment, he grabbed Storm's ankle—and hung above the deep gorge.

Trina landed safely on the other side. She snatched the sword from Storm's hand, dropped it to the ground, and began to pull on Storm's arm.

"Hurry, Trina!" Wits shouted, squeezing Storm's leg with all his might. "I'm starting to lose my grip!"

Storm began to sweat. His fingers were about to break. And worst of all, he knew Trina wasn't strong enough to pull both him and Wits to safety.

"I can't hold on any more!" Storm screamed.

His hand slipped off the tree trunk. Storm and Wits dropped toward the raging river, screaming.

Suddenly, Storm felt an unseen force take hold of him. He stopped falling, as if he were connected to a giant spring. A blue bolt of energy snaked around him and Wits, raised them up, and set them gently on the ground.

The three friends stood there, gazing at the sword, their faces stunned and pale. The blue power bolt that had saved their lives vanished into the sword's tip. Storm tried to say something, but he couldn't think of the right words.

The sword spoke instead. "I believe that you are doing what is right and good. Only a wish that I could do the same when I was king of Urnum. But I be forewarned. My powers are limited. I cannot defeat Skullagger. That is your task."

Storm picked up the sword. The handle was warm to his touch.

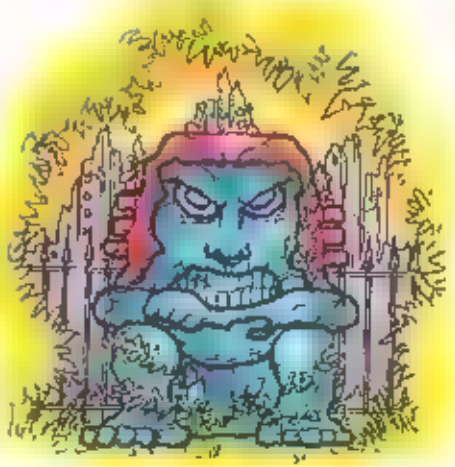
"Look to the sky," the sword said.

In the east, dawn was breaking. In a matter of hours, the Kiltish would open fire on the trapped Westican army.

"Let's go," Storm said, as he turned and rushed into the jungle. "We've got to get to the volcano—and fast!"

◆◆◆

After a long march, the three friends came to a clearing in the jungle. The ruins of a giant fort sat in the center of the clearing, glowing in the first dim light of day. There were enormous stairways, walls, fallen pillars—and everything was made of crumbled stones. At the front gate, a huge tiki-statue stood guard. Its eyes seemed to follow them as they walked.



"This fort must have protected Urnum," Wits said. He pointed up an old road that led through the ruins, and then curved up the steep volcano. "See, this road leads straight to the lost city."

"Just think," Storm said, his eyes bright with amazement. "We're the only three people to have stood here in five thousand years."

It wasn't hard to imagine what the fort might have been like five thousand years before. Storm could almost see the mighty warriors of Ornum marching down this road in long straight columns, their spears gleaming. And he could almost see the King himself—a bearded man in a long robe and a crown made of jewels—standing atop a tower as his troops marched off to sea.

Storm heard a sound behind him. He spun around, but the ruins were perfectly still, perfectly dark. Only a crow cried in the lonely distance.

"Let's get out of here," Storm said, gulping. "This place definitely gives me the creeps."

The road left the ruins and began to rise steeply up the side of the volcano. They climbed and climbed, and soon they were high above the jungle. Far below, they could see the lighthouse, and the battleships just offshore. They could see the Kiltish Army moving into position on the rocky beach.

And they could see the tiny Westican forces hiding in their shallow trench.

"We've got to hurry," Storm said, climbing higher and higher.

Just then they heard a terrible screech in the sky, and an enormous shadow covered them.

It was a giant green bird—and it was angry.

Storm spun around, aimed the sword, and shot a power ball. The ball smashed against the bird's breast and exploded—but the bird kept coming, unhurt.

The sword's voice rang out. "The bird is too powerful. Save yourself, Storm! The bird only wants me!"

Trina and Wits ducked behind a boulder, but Storm tripped and fell back against the path. The enormous bird swooped down, its talons opened like hungry jaws. Storm shot another power ball, but the ball exploded harmlessly against the creature's mighty armor. The wind from the its massive wings blew Storm's head back, and its talons came closer to his face.

Storm screamed and covered his eyes.

But the bird didn't touch him. It only yanked the sword from Storm's hand and flapped away with slow, powerful strokes of its giant wings.

As it rose, it let loose a triumphant cry.

Storm watched the bird—and the sword—rise into the blue sky, then disappear into the top of the crater.

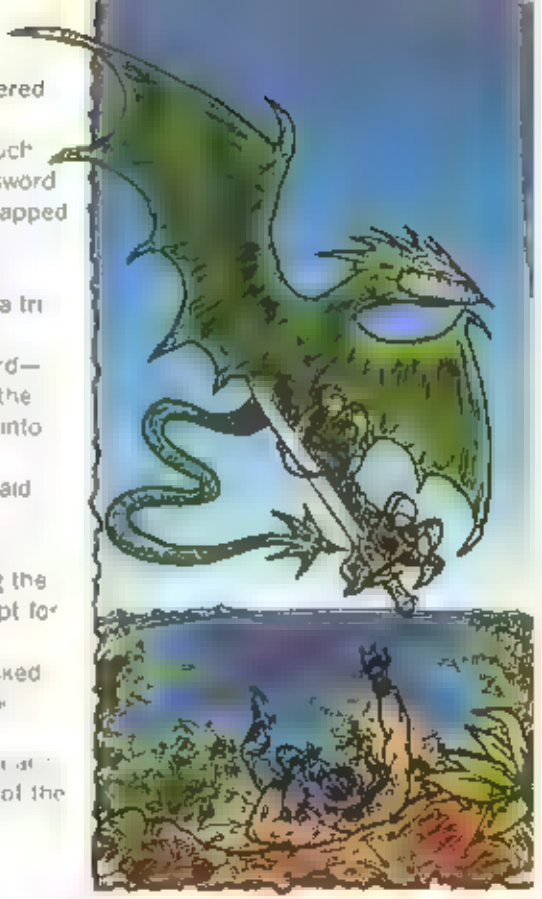
"Are you OK?" Trina said, rushing over to Storm.

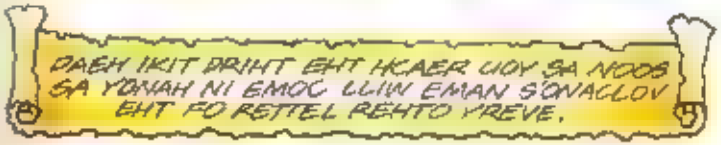
"I'm fine," Storm said, standing up and brushing the dust off his pants. "Except for one thing."

"What's that?" Wits asked.

"I want my sword back," Storm answered.

He turned up the path and rushed toward the crater of the great volcano.





The truth was, Storm was actually worried about the sword.

If there was one place where the sword was not welcome, that place was Urnum. Thousands of angry ghosts still haunted the ruins of the lost city. And each one wanted nothing more than to seize the sword—and make the King of Urnum suffer for his mistakes.

He was sure that the giant bird had been a guardian of the lost city, and that it would hand the sword right over to the angry spirits of Urnum.

Storm felt it more than ever.

He wanted his sword back.

Now.

The Lost City

Storm hoisted himself onto the first pillar, blew a bubble, and gazed down into the crater of the great volcano.

"Ingawa!" he gasped.

Trina and Wits climbed up beside him—and their eyes opened wide with astonishment.

The middle of the crater was filled with orange, boiling lava. But all along the crater's edge, strange brown lava rocks rose above the fiery murk. Across these rocks stretched the lost city of Urnum.

Shattered columns lined the empty streets. The walls of ruined temples, carved with bizarre tiki-faces, surged upward from the rock. Here and there, a few pillars stood where giant houses once had been. Storm could easily imagine that—many years ago—this place had been the beautiful capital of a great and mighty empire.

At the far edge of Urnum, flush against the crater wall, stood the largest building of the mall. Broken pillars lied the way to its grand entrance.

"That must have been the royal palace," Wits said. "I'll bet that's where all the weapons are."

"But where's my sword?" Storm said.

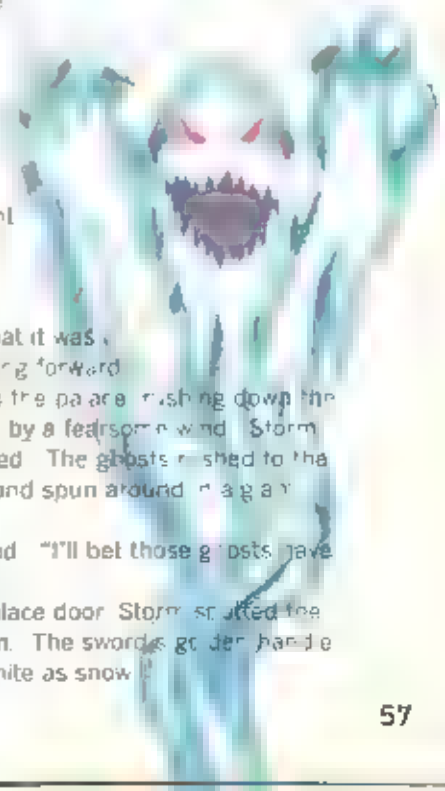
They scrambled down the rocks and sprang onto the streets of Urnum. Streams of white smoke began to rise from the ruins. At first, Storm thought it was just smoke from the molten lava. But when the smoke started to scream and spin and fly, he knew exactly what it was.

"Ghosts," Storm cried, pointing forward.

The ghosts screamed toward the palace, rushing down the streets like wisps of cloud blown by a fearsome wind. Storm stopped in his tracks and watched. The ghosts rushed to the palace door, where they wailed and spun around in a giant white swarm.

"I've got a hunch," Storm said. "I'll bet those ghosts have found the sword for us. C'mon!"

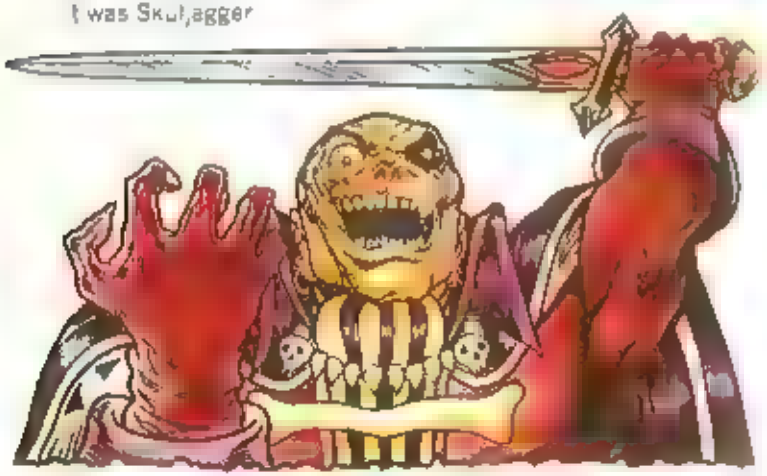
When he got closer to the palace door, Storm spotted the sword in the center of the swarm. The sword's golden handle and silver blade were both as white as snow.



Storm didn't hesitate. But as he ran toward the ghosts, Storm saw a shadow emerge from behind a pillar and rush toward the sword. Storm picked up his speed, but the shadow reached the sword first.

Amazed, Storm watched the shadow plunge into the swarm of ghosts. It grabbed the sword and swung it in giant circles around its head, shouting as it sliced the air. The ghosts screamed and scattered in all directions. When the last ghost vanished, the shadow turned to Storm with a burst of evil laughter and held the sword high above its head. A beam of sunlight fell across the shadow's ghastly face.

It was Skuljagger.



Storm's eyes opened wide.

"Greetings, pig's meat," Skuljagger said. He swiped the sword through the air again. "Thank you for returning my sword. Since you know you'd also be leading me straight to *Urnum*. Now please excuse me, ridiculous rodent. I've got *work* to do."

Skuljagger laughed, spun around, and disappeared through the palace door.

"After him!" Storm cried. "We can't let Skuljagger get hold of the weapons!"

The three friends entered the palace at a sprint. It was a vast and stony place, with stairways leading up to darkness and long halls that connected one massive room to the next.

"I think he went this way!" Storm said, wheeling around a corner. He led Wits and Trina into a room with a giant window that looked out into the depths of the crater.

"It's the weapons room!" Wits said, stopping short. "We found it!"

Storm could hardly believe his eyes. The room was filled with strange bombs, rifles, missiles, and huge panels covered with complicated buttons and gauges. There were cannons of all sizes, but they didn't look like any cannons Storm had ever seen.

Wits bent over a giant cannon and began to study its complex control panel.

"These must be plasma blasters," Storm said. "Can you figure out how to work this stuff, Wits?"

"No prob, Storm," Wits said, reaching toward a lever.

"Hands off, boy!" Skuljagger shouted, jumping up from behind a giant plasma blaster. He lowered the blaster at Wits, adjusting the barrel with the push of a button. "Now why don't you three just move away from that plasma blaster?" Skuljagger said. "Stand over there, against the window, and put your hands up—like good little boys and girls."

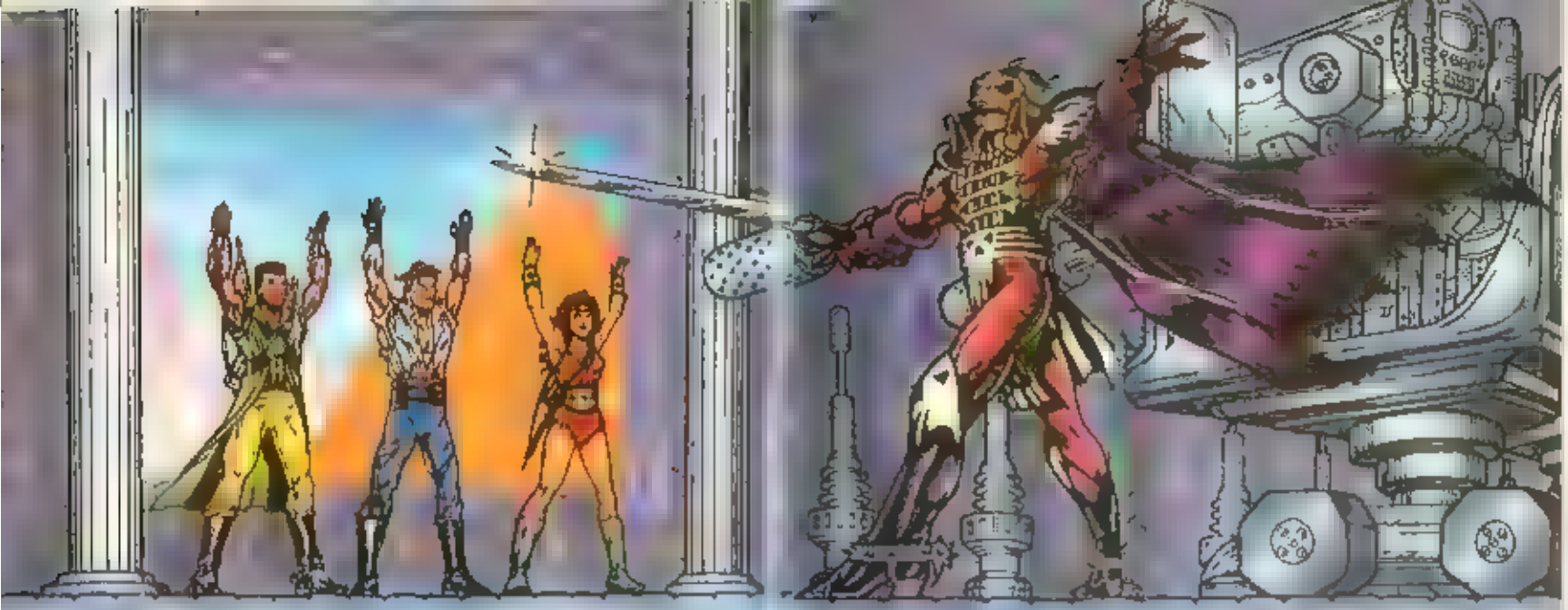
Storm, Wits, and Trina stepped slowly away from Skuljagger until they stopped against a giant window. They raised their hands in the air. Skuljagger grinned.

"You'll never get away with this, Skuljagger!" Storm said, his face turning red with rage. "*Never!*"

"Oh *really?*" Skuljagger said. The Captain's one good eye narrowed into an angry slit, and he lifted up the sword. "Ever since I found this sword in a jeremelad mine, I've been searching for the lost city of Urnum. But I never found the city because I never earned the sword's full power. But *you*, Storm Saxon, *you* earned the power of the sword *for me!*"

"How did you find us?" Storm asked, his blood boiling.

"It was almost too easy," Skuljagger answered. "I saw you



sneaking through my enemies' ranks right now, you were so careful not to make a sound—just like little kids playing soldiers." Skull-jagger threw his head back in laughter. "All I did was follow you. Where else would you be going on the night before your final battle?"

Skull-jagger looked around the weapons room, like a man who had just discovered a city of gold. "And now, I have all the weapons I need to *rule the world!*"

Storm knew they were in trouble.

Deep trouble.

If Skull-jagger grabbed all the weapons of Urnum, he could destroy the Westican army in the blink of an eye. And then he could destroy the Kiltish Empire itself, and make the entire world his own.

Suddenly the rumble of cannons rose from the shore below, like the sound of old-style thunder.

"Do you hear that lovely sound?" Skull-jagger said, smiling and opening his eyes wide. "Our Kiltish cannons. We've started bombing your pathetic Westican army. In an hour, there won't be a Westican [illegible] alive."

But Storm heard another sound as well. He listened closely. The noise came from deep inside the palace. It sounded like a whole mob of people screaming and running. The sound got closer and closer, louder and louder.

Suddenly a giant cloud of ghosts burst through the door and streaked toward Skull-jagger. Skull-jagger swung the sword back and forth through the air, but the ghosts began to circle around him, like a swarm of furious bees.

Storm saw his chance. He sprinted to the plasma blaster and started pushing every button he could. "It's time," he shouted. "How do I *fire* this thing?"

Storm finally hit the right button, and the ancient plasma blaster came to life. A blast shot out and exploded right at Skull-jagger's feet, creating a giant hole in the floor. Skull-jagger's

right foot slipped into the chasm and he swung his arms madly to keep his balance.

"AAAHHH—I'm falling!" Skuljagger screamed as the ghosts spun around his head. He snatched desperately at the ghosts as if he could grasp them and break his fall. But the ghosts were like fog, and Skuljagger's hands slipped through them. The Captain's face writhed in terror as he fell slowly back. At last he flung the sword into the air and plunged screaming into the chasm.

"The *sword*!" Storm shouted, leaping toward the black hole. He snatched the sword's handle, then skidded to a stop an inch from the edge.

Storm gripped the sword tightly and looked down. He saw Skuljagger tumbling into darkness, his cape floating up around him. The ghosts still swarmed around the Captain's falling body. A scream rose up from the black hole. "Storm Jaxon, I'm going to—" But the scream got quieter and quieter. Finally it vanished altogether, and Umbum fell silent.

Storm looked back at Wits and Trina.

"Ingawa!" Wits said, breaking into a smile.

"Skuljagger's *gone*!" Trina shouted, running over to give Storm a hug. "And he's gone for good!"

Storm took a deep breath and shook his head.

"Wow!" he said. "Was that close, or *what*?"

But the three friends didn't have time to celebrate. Down below, the Kultish cannons were ripping apart the Westcan trenches, and the Kultish army was preparing for the final attack. In a matter of minutes, the Westcan army would be destroyed.

"We've got to figure out how to get a blaster down to the battlefield," Storm said.

He glanced around the room, then slapped the wall in frustration. It seemed like an impossible task.

The sword spoke out. "Look to the map, and be brave."

"The map!" Wits said, pointing to a giant map of Westcanon the wall. There were red buttons all over the map, on every bay and river and mountain. "Maybe if I push this red button—" Wits pushed one of the buttons that sat exactly where the lighthouse was. "I wonder what it—"

A piece of the stone wall slid open. A metal track appeared and dropped down the edge of the volcano toward the Westcan jungle. One of the small plasma blasters lurked then began to roll along the track.

"Catch that blaster, *fast*!" Storm cried, jumping on. "Let's hope this track leads us to the battle!"

Trina and Wits scrambled onto the weapon just as it dropped toward the jungle far below.

"YEEEEOWWW!" the three friends shouted. The blaster shot like a bullet down the track, and Storm felt his stomach drop into his shoes. Their hair was standing out straight behind them, and the wind brought tears to their eyes. The blaster raced at a hundred miles an hour—straight down the side of the volcano—and all they could do was scream.

They took a sharp turn toward the jungle.

"We're going to crash into the trees!" Wits shouted.

They entered the jungle with a whoosh of air, turning quickly around mountains and missing trees by an inch. The track

rose out of the jungle floor ahead of them, draped with dirt and moss. And the blaster just kept speeding forward.

"What's that?" Tryna shouted, pointing ahead.

A gigantic fire-backed lizard was standing in the middle of the track, breathing fire and waiting to turn them into dinner. If they ran into the lizard, they'd all be smashed to bits.

Storm armed the sword. He shot a power ball and watched it zoom forward. The ball smashed into the flaming mouth of the lizard—and the gigantic beast vaporized with a fierce scream and a cloud of blue smoke.

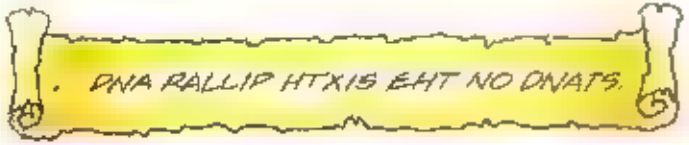
A half second later, the blaster plunged through the smoke and broke into the clear. Then it curved around a tree, banked around a mountainside, and veered off sharply toward the coast.

"Just one question," Storm said to the sword. "Where are we headed?"

The sword had just the answer they wanted to hear.

"To the lighthouse."

Storm lifted the sword above his head, and the three friends shouted in triumph as their blaster shot through the dense green jungle.

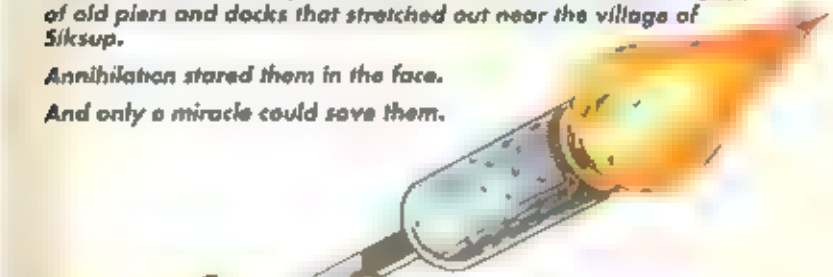


The Westicans were crumbling.

Two Kilnsh battleships relentlessly pounded the trapped rebel army. At the same time, the Kilnsh land forces were advancing quickly, taking more and more of the Westican beach. As the Kilnsh moved forward, the Westicans retreated toward a bunch of old piers and docks that stretched out near the village of Siksup.

Annihilation stared them in the face.

And only a miracle could save them.



7 the FINAL BATTLE

The plasma blaster shattered through the jungle and sped toward the rocky beach. Storm could see the lighthouse up ahead, surrounded by the smoke of a hundred cannons. Over the sound of gunfire, Storm could hear the shouts and screams of battle.

"Hold on, everyone!" Wrts shouted. "We're dropping!"

The speeding blaster dropped into a ravine, plunged straight toward the rocks, then banked away at the very last second. Storm felt his stomach drop. In all the noise and confusion of battle, the blaster slipped easily through the Kilnsh lines. A few warriors noticed the strange contraption, but Storm took care of them with a couple of well-aimed power balls.

The blaster finally curved onto the beach beside the lighthouse—and stopped right in the thick of battle.

"Duck, Trina!" Storm shouted, as a Kiltish warrior charged across the blaster, his bayonet before him.

Trina ducked just in time. The warrior tripped over her back and tumbled forward into the air. Storm vaporized him with a power ball before he even hit the ground.

"Storm! Wits! Trina!" Coe Jaxon shouted, swinging his arm back and forth. "It's too late! Retreat toward the docks!"

Storm pulled a lever on the plasma blaster and threw it into reverse. The blaster jerked backward across the beach, its wheels throwing sand at the Kiltish. Storm steered the blaster onto a pier, then spun the barrel around and adjusted it up and to the right so it pointed straight at the Kiltish Army. On the beach before them, the Kiltish shouted with triumph and shook their rifles in the air.

All the Westicans gathered around the amazing machine.

"Is this from Urnum?" Coe Jaxon asked. "Does it work?"

"Of course it works," Storm answered. He pushed the red button. Then he pushed it again.

But nothing happened.

A cannonball from a battleship exploded behind them, destroying a whole section of the pier, and sending fragments of wood and shrapnel through the air. The Westicans were trapped. Unless the blaster started working—and soon—defeat was just a matter of minutes away. Storm kept pushing the red button, harder and harder.

Suddenly the sword's voice boomed out from Storm's side. "Storm! You've got the trigger guard on! Take it off, and fire!"

"The trigger guard?" Storm cried, looking at all the controls. "But which button is the trigger guard?"

"Try this one," Wits said, pushing a yellow button.

Suddenly a giant red plasma blast shot forth from the blaster. It hit the sand and exploded into fire, throwing three Kiltish warriors into the air like toy dolls.

"YES!" Storm said.

He fired off another plasma blast, and hit two Kiltish cannons head on, leaving them a heap of smoking rubble.

The Kiltish weren't shouting with triumph anymore. They could tell that the tide of battle was about to turn.

"Storm!" Coe Jaxon said, rushing over. "Turn around and get those battleships! Their cannon fire has been crippling us all morning. If we can sink the ships, then we've got a chance of pushing the army back!"

Storm spun the plasma blaster around and shot a blast at the closest battleship. The red blast streaked across the water and smashed into the starboard hull. A giant explosion rocked the ship and snapped the main mast. [illegible] Kiltish sails tumbled into heaps and [illegible] from the deck.

Storm turned the blaster and [illegible] the second battleship, further in the distance. [illegible] blast splintered through the wood on deck, and Storm saw barrels, cannons, and sailors go flying through the air. He aimed at the lower [illegible] fired another shot, punching a hole right at the water line. The mighty Kiltish battleship tipped on its side and started to sink.

"YES!" Storm shouted, as a giant cheer rose up from the Westican army.

"Now, let's take care of the army!" Coe Jaxon shouted, and a bolt of courage shot through the Westican ranks.

Storm spun the blaster around and fired another red plasma blast. The explosion took out a sergeant and three warriors. The Kiltish pelted the Westicans with rifle-fire, but it didn't do a bit of good. The Westicans pushed forward—faster and faster.

"We haven't seen Skuljagger during the whole battle," Coe Jaxon said, pulling another arrow from his quiver. "I wonder if he's planning a surprise attack."

"I doubt *that*," Storm answered, as he shot another plasma blast. "Skuljagger followed us up to Tirnum, so he could get control of all the weapons. But we threw him down an endless pit—the scumbag—just like he deserved. I don't think we'll be hearing from old *Skuljagger* again."

Coe Jaxon smiled, gave Storm a thumbs up, then turned back to the battle. "Faster, men," he cried. "Drive them off the beach."

The Westicans drove the Kiltish all the way into Siksup, right near the lighthouse. The villagers had escaped into Tuscamesh long before, and all the doors and windows were barred shut. The battle raged through the streets, with Storm leading the way.

The Westicans had the Kiltish on the run. They pushed the Kiltish all the way through the village and down toward a rocky beach. If they could trap the Kiltish army against the sea, the Kiltish would be forced to surrender or perish.

Storm could almost taste the sweetness of victory.

He fired off another blast, and watched the Kiltish turn to flee. The Westicans followed the Kiltish over a ring of giant boulders, then down onto the wide beach below. The Kiltish dug in near the water, and put up a wall of gun-fire.

But it wasn't enough to stop the Westicans.

Storm drove the plasma blaster onto the beach, and took aim at the Kiltish. He smiled, and pushed the red button.

Nothing happened. His heart skipped a beat. He pushed the trigger guard, but that didn't work either.

"What's *wrong?*" Storm shouted at the sword.

"I do not know," the sword answered.

Storm shook his head. "Wits, help me fix this thing!" he shouted.

"Just keep pushing the red button," Wits said, fiddling with the complicated gauges. "Keep pushing it, something happens."

Storm pushed the red button over and over, but nothing happened.

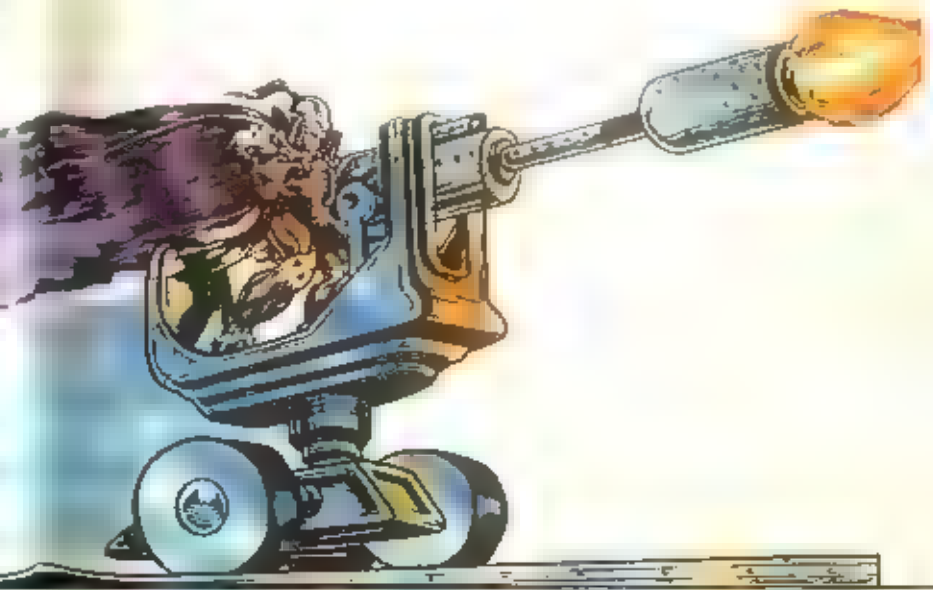
"*Look!*" Trina shouted, pointing up the beach.

Storm jerked his head around, and his mouth dropped open.

Another plasma blaster—a *giant* plasma blaster—was hurtling toward them on a shiny metal track.

And *Skuljagger* was at the controls.

"What the...!?" Storm cried, pushing the red button even faster. "But it *can't* be true!"



The huge plasma blaster hit the shore and Skuljagger gunned it once then yanked it to a stop, throwing sand everywhere. He stopped right in front of the Kiltish Army, and turned the giant barrel toward the village of Siksup.

Skuljagger looked down across the battered field. His face was burned and dirty, and his purple cape was ripped to shreds. Still, he wore a ghastly grin.

The entire battlefield fell silent. Storm stopped pushing the button and just gazed across at Skuljagger, his face ashen.

"It's not so easy to get rid of Skuljagger!" the Captain shouted across the sands. "Just when you thought I'd be crushed, I used my cape as a parachute and climbed up inch by inch from the lava pit. No one can stop Skuljagger!"

With that, he turned the barrel of his great plasma blaster and fired at the village.

An enormous red plasma blast flashed across the sky. A split second later, the entire village exploded into flames. The flames leaped high into the air, and the whole Westican army was thrown to the ground. Skuljagger laughed and turned the barrel on Storm.

The Westican army climbed slowly to its feet. Everyone knew that now—after a day and a half of battle—the war was truly over. Skuljagger had them in the palm of his dirty hand.

"First I shall *vaporize* you!" Skuljagger shouted across the beach. "Then I shall vaporize Tuscamesh, and every Westican worm who lives there! I promise you that I shall leave Westica nothing but a *wasteland*—a place where *vultures* come to feed. And then, with the weapons of Jmum, I shall rule the *world!*"

Storm felt his hands begin to shake. A bead of cold sweat ran down his side. He racked his brain, hoping to dream up some amazing plan.

"But if you don't want your island to be vaporized," Skuljagger continued, "Then I have an offer for you. I will spare Westica—and all of the people in it, . but only under one condition."

Storm had a bad feeling.

"You must hand over Storm Jaxon," Skuljagger said. "And the sword he stole."

The Westican army gasped in outrage.

Storm stood up, and leaped down to the sand.

"Storm, don't go!" Coe Jaxon said, grabbing him by the shoulder. "Skuljagger's a lying slug. He's not going to spare us just because we hand you over. He's going to take your sword, and then vaporize the whole island anyway. Our only chance is to fight—and hope for a miracle."

Storm looked his father in the eye.

"You may be right, dad," Storm said. "But you may be wrong. Maybe Skuljagger will spare the island. This whole revolution is my fault. It all started when I stole Skuljagger's sword. Maybe if I give it back and—"

"But he's going to *kill* you!" Coe Jaxon said.

Storm nodded. "It's our only chance to survive."

Storm grabbed the sword and headed across the sands, alone. He kept his eyes fixed right on Skuljagger. He tried to make it seem like he was not scared, though his guts were churning and spinning inside. Skuljagger kept the barrel of the plasma blaster aimed at Storm's chest.

"Stop right there, Jaxon!" Skuljagger said when Storm was twenty yards away. "Throw me the sword. NOW!"

Storm stopped. He gripped the sword more tightly with his hand, and brought his arm back. He heard the sword speak out—but so quietly that only he could hear it.

"Be brave," the sword whispered. "There may be good in Skuljagger yet."

Storm doubted it. He whipped his arm around and hurled the sword through the air. It flashed once in the morning sun, then sank point first into the sand.

Skuljagger leaped from the blaster and snatched the sword.

Storm kept walking forward, till he and Skuljagger were standing eye to eye.

"Here I am, Skuljagger," Storm said, opening up his arms.

"I'll even give you a nice clean shot. Just get it over with, and let my people live."

"Ha ha!" Skuljagger laughed, throwing his head back. "Did you really think I'd let Westica survive, after all the trouble you've caused! I just wanted the chance to eliminate you... all by myself."

Storm just kept staring into Skuljagger's one good eye.

"Any last words, Jaxon?" Skuljagger asked.

Storm didn't say a thing. He just kept staring.

The Captain raised the sword above him like a dagger. Storm closed his eyes. His face contorted as Skuljagger plunged the sword-tip all the way through Storm's chest. The sword came out the other side.

Skuljagger laughed and pulled the blade back out.

But there wasn't a drop of blood on the blade.

In a flash, Storm realized what had happened. The sword had saved his life—*again*.

Storm ripped into action, swinging his foot at Skuljagger's face. His boot met Skuljagger's jaw and knocked the Captain's head back. Then Storm rammed his elbow into Skuljagger's stomach, and Skuljagger doubled over. As the Captain's head flew down, Storm planted his knee in Skuljagger's face.

The sword flew from Skuljagger's hand, and Storm snatched it out of mid-air.

Stunned, Skuljagger staggered backward. He looked over his shoulder, and called for help from his warriors. But all the warriors stood as still as statues, gazing at Storm as if they were gazing at a ghost.

Without losing a beat, Skuljagger grabbed a dagger from his belt and lunged at Storm with all the fury of a battle-dog.

"Jaxon...!"

Storm instinctively thrust the sword toward Skuljagger's onrushing chest. The instant the sword-tip touched Skuljagger's flesh, Storm was blinded by a giant explosion of light. He jumped back as the explosion turned into a plume of twisting, thick black smoke.

When the smoke cleared, a single gray rat was sitting on the sand.

The Kiltish Army gasped.

The rat squealed once, scampered between Storm's legs, and disappeared into the rocks.

◆◆◆

Storm leaped onto Skuljagger's giant plasma-blaster, and spun it around so the barrel pointed right at the Kiltish Army.

"Throw down your weapons, and surrender!" Storm shouted. "Surrender now, or be vaporized!"

The Kiltish Army—stunned—threw down their weapons and raised their empty hands into the air. The Westicans rushed across the sand and grabbed all the Kiltish rifles.

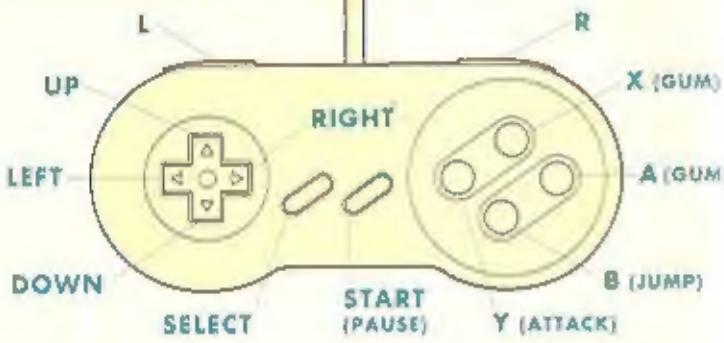
For a moment, the battlefield was silent.

Storm climbed on top of the plasma-blaster, and raised his sword high.

"From this day on, I declare that Westica will be a free and independent nation!" Storm shouted. "Long live Westica!"

REIF EHT NO STNEMTSUJDA GNIMIA TSRIF
S'RETSALB AMSALP EHT REBMEMER UOY
ELIHW YTIC EHT NI GEK TSRIF EHT PU KCIP.

INSTRUCTIONS



The Controls:

Y	The "attack" button. Use **Y** to swipe the sword, shoot power-balls, and shoot while in battle perspectives. Also use it to pick up and throw objects. (To pick up an object, stand next to the object and hold **Y**; to throw the object, release **Y**.)
X/A	Both **X** and **A** activate the bubble gum power-ups.
B	The "jump" button.
START	Pauses and unpauses the game.
L/R	Use for key-strokes to enter secret Fantasy Zones. (*Not* LEFT/RIGHT on the Control Pad)
LEFT	Moves you left.
RIGHT	Moves you right.
UP	Use to climb ladders and ropes, enter battle perspectives, or float up with bubbles. Also use **UP** for key-strokes to enter secret Fantasy Zones.
DOWN	Use to crouch, climb down ladders and ropes, or float down with bubbles. Also use **DOWN** for key-strokes to enter secret Fantasy Zones.

The Objective: Move Storm Jaxon through the entire game and defeat Skúljagger at the end.

The Story: The ***Skúljagger*** story—found on pages 3–75—is packed with hidden clues. If you can figure these clues out, they'll help you find lots of secret things in the game.

Starting the Game: Insert the game pak into the Super Nintendo machine and turn on the power. Then select either ONE PLAYER START, TWO PLAYER START, PASSCODE, or BUBBLEGUM PRACTICE. Choose ONE PLAYER START or TWO PLAYER START to begin a new game. Choose PASSCODE when you have earned a passcode in previous play and want to jump forward quickly to more advanced Chapters. (You'll earn a passcode at the end of Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4.) After the PASSCODE menu, choose either ONE PLAYER START or TWO PLAYER START and begin play. Choose BUBBLE GUM PRACTICE to learn how to use the gum power-ups.

Jemeralds: There are 4 kinds of jemeralds: red, green, blue, and giant blue. Collect a *red* jemerald and earn the ability to shoot power-balls from the sword. (You can collect up to 3 red jemeralds.) Collect 25 *green* jemeralds and earn an extra life. *Blue* jemeralds give you extra time on the timer and also function as place markers when you lose a life. A *giant blue* jemerald indicates the end of a map.

Lives: You begin the game with 5 lives. If an enemy touches you when you have any number of red jemeralds, you'll lose all of your red jemeralds. If an enemy touches you when you don't have any red jemeralds but you do have any number of green jemeralds, you'll lose all of your green jemeralds. If an enemy touches you when you have no jemeralds, you'll lose a life. You'll also lose a life when you fall off the screen or run out of time.

Defeating Enemies: You can defeat enemies by throwing objects at them, swiping the sword at them, shooting power-balls at them, or employing certain bubble gum power-ups against them.

Bubble Gum Power-Ups: There are 4 different types of bubble gum power-ups, each with a unique capability.

Snap-cherry: Lets you fly. Pump **X** or **A** to keep the bubble properly inflated. You lose the power-up when the bubble pops, or when you land. If you're touched by an enemy while this power-up is active, you'll lose this power-up but not a life.

Westican-orange: Lets you drop gum grenades for a few seconds. Press **X** or **A** to drop grenades. If you're touched

by an enemy while this power-up is active, you'll lose this power-up but not a life.

Sea-grape: Makes you temporarily invincible. Press **X** or **A** to activate, then press **B** to jump, and **UP** and **DOWN** to bounce higher and higher.

Island-lime: Lets you clear the screen of enemies. Press **X** or **A** to activate.

Fantasy Zones: These are secret, bizzare-looking sections of the game which you can find by picking up certain objects, or by standing in certain spots and pressing the **L**, **R**, **UP**, or **DOWN** buttons in different combinations. *Some fantasy zones are easy to find; others you will only find if you read the book and figure out clues.* You cannot lose a life in a fantasy zone—if an enemy touches you, you'll simply return to the regular map.

Scoring: Points are awarded for collecting jemeralds, defeating enemies, and finishing maps.

Battle Perspective: These are areas of the game where you have the ability to shoot "into" the screen, at enemies in the distance. To enter a battle perspective, stand next to the weapon and press **UP**. Press **Y** to shoot, and **UP** and **DOWN** to aim. To exit, press either **LEFT** or **RIGHT.**

Ropes & Ladders: When neccassary, you can jump onto a rope or ladder by pressing the **B** button (jump) and then **UP**. You cannot swipe the sword while on a rope or ladder. You can jump off a rope or ladder at any time by pressing the **B** button.

Status Bar Display: The top of each screen will display the following information: your player number and number of lives remaining, which bubble gum power up you have (if any), the timer, how many green jemeralds you have (if any), how many red jemeralds you have (if any), and your point total. In the boss sections, an additional power meter will appear to indicate your progress against the boss.

◆◆◆

Programmed by Realtime Associates
Book Illustration by The Dynamic Duo®
Book Design by Harakawa Sisco Inc

ASC™ 90 Day Limited Warranty

AMERICAN SOFTWORKS CORPORATION ("ASC") warrants to the original consumer purchaser of this software product that the medium on which the computer program is recorded will be free from defects in materials and workmanship for a period of ninety (90) days from the date of purchase under normal home use. The computer program is sold "as is" without express or implied warranty of any kind and ASC will not be liable for any loss or damage of any kind from use of this program. If a defect covered by this warranty occurs during the 90 day warranty period, ASC will repair or replace the product, at its option, free of charge.

To Receive this Warranty Service:

1.DO NOT return your defective product to retailer.

2.Notify ASC Consumer Service Department of the problem requiring warranty service by calling: 1-212-972-6262. Our Consumer Service Department is in operation from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday. Please DO NOT send your product to ASC before calling our Consumer Service Department.

3.If our ASC Service Representative is unable to solve the problem by phone, you will be provided with a Return Authorization Number. Simply record this number on the outside of your packaging of your defective product and return it, FREIGHT PREPAID AND INSURED FOR LOSS OR DAMAGE, together with your sales slip or similar proof-of-purchase, within this 90-day Warranty period to:

American Softworks Corporation, Consumer Service Department,
228 East 45th Street, New York, NY 10017.

WARRANTY LIMITATIONS:

ALL IMPLIED WARRANTIES, INCLUDING WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTIBILITY AND FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, ARE LIMITED TO NINETY DAYS FROM THE DATE OF PURCHASE AND ARE SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS SET FORTH HEREIN. ASC WILL NOT BE LIABLE FOR CONSEQUENTIAL OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES RESULTING FROM THE BREACH OF ANY EXPRESS OR IMPLIED WARRANTIES.

The provisions of this warranty are valid in the United States only. Some states do not allow limitations on how long an implied warranty lasts or exclusion of consequential or incidental damages, so the above limitations and exclusion may not apply to you. This warranty gives you specific legal rights, and you may also have other rights which vary from state to state.

This warranty will not apply if the product has been damaged while in your possession, by negligence, accident, abuse or tampering, or by other causes unrelated to defective material or workmanship.